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ARINDAM CHAKRABARTI

DENYING EXISTENCE

The Logic, Epistemology and Pragmatics of Negative Existentials and Fictional Discourse

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PREFACE

Thanks to the Inlaks Foundation in India, I was able to do my doctoral research on *Our Talk About Nonexistents* at Oxford in the early eighties. The two greatest philosophers of that heaven of analytical philosophy – Peter Strawson and Michael Dummett – supervised my work, reading and criticising all the fledgling philosophy that I wrote during those three years. At Sir Peter's request, Gareth Evans, shortly before his death, lent me an unpublished transcript of Kripke's John Locke Lectures. Work on the Appendix about Indian Philosophy was supervised by the late Professor Bimal Krishna Matilal with whom informal but intense philosophical conversations used to spill over into dinner at his place almost every other day. It was Professor Matilal who sent me, over a summer, to study a tough Navya-Nyāya text under his own Nyāya teacher Pandit Visvabandhu Tarkatirtha at Calcutta. All four of these teachers were as kind to me as my life-long mentor in philosophy Professor Pranab Kumar Sen, whose clarity and depth remain the unreachable regulative ideal of my intellect.

When I came back to India, my life became blissfully free of the agonising anxiety to publish, until, after a conference at Jadavpur University where I gave an impromptu paper, ironically enough, on *Non-doings*, I met Derek Parfit. He had a six-hour conversation with me, explicitly planning my life. Five years had already elapsed since I had finished my D. Phil, but Derek read my thesis and liked it. Over the next five years he did all he could to make me write a book, disregarding my diffidence, laziness and lack of organisation. My former colleague at University College London, the meticulous Marcus Giaquinto, read a crucial part of my first draft and devastated it in a way that only friends care to do. In 1992, when I had finished writing the concluding chapter answering all imaginable objections to my position, I once again sent it to Professor Dummett and Professor Strawson. Unwavering teachers, both of them read and commented just as they had ten years back with more care than I shall ever deserve.

My debt to my friend Omkar Goswami is too large and personal to describe.

My wife Vrinda put up with years of reflected disgrace as I kept missing deadlines, after she had patiently given priority to my research over hers. This book on nonexistents, she feared, would turn out to be self-referring! It is due to Annie Kuipers of Kluwer that I finally managed to prove her justified belief false.

INTRODUCTION
THE PUZZLE OF SINGULAR EXISTENCE-DENIALS

What is that Nature of Things (*tattva*, knowledge of which liberates us from suffering)? The existence of existents and the nonexistence of nonexistents ... How can the latter be apprehended through a means of knowledge? (Even their nonexistence can be known) through their non-apprehension when existents are being known.

– Vātsyāyana, *Nyāya Sūtrabhāsya*, Introductory Section, p. 1

Not everything exists. Some things do, others do not. El Salvador exists, but Eldorado does not. Denials of existence form an essential part not only of philosophical, but even of scientific and lay speech. When we declare entire *classes* of things to be memberless, or report a certain *kind* – defined by a cluster of features – to be actually unexemplified, we can be said to issue *general* negative existentials. Neither the use of the grammatical predicate "exists" nor any putatively singular reference to the very item whose existence is denied is essential for making such statements. We can smoothly paraphrase "F's do not exist" as "There are no F's" or "Nothing is an F" or "It is false that something is an F." But we also often catch ourselves picking out specific individuals from a disproved theory, a debunked myth, a broken dream, a dispelled hallucination, a work of fiction, the plot of a film, nonexistent items from a remembered recent past or a projected near future. Each of these alleged individuals, it seems, can first be referred to by a name, a demonstrative or a definite description before one goes on to say that *it* does not exist. These avowedly *singular negative existentials* have vexed logicians in ancient, medieval and modern times, in both East and West.

Some philosophers both in very ancient and rather recent times have believed that every single thing we can genuinely refer to or talk about must really exist. For them, negative existentials could never be true and yet genuinely singular. Of course, one could name an actual single object and say falsely that it is nonexistent. But, according to these philosophers, the speaker's designative intention and existence-denial could never both be equally sincere. How can you expect to deny *truly* the existence of an item which, you think, is there for you to succeed in referring to? One can caricature this position with the slogan: "*Name it. And it exists!*" Yet, it is an extremely influential position. As such, it is almost the received wisdom in current philosophy of language and logic.

To this, an opposition could be built up in the following manner: surely, my grandfather's name does not become a disguised definite description from the

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 1–7.

moment of his death. Nor should we, for that matter, withhold the title of a genuinely singular expression from the name of a projected building or a planned baby. And once we have allowed the names of not-yet-existent entities to be recognised as singular referring expressions, there is a very strong pull to concede that status even to names of the merely possible, to names of fictional items, to names of some specific objects of unfulfilled desire. Such a *slope* can lead us to the ontologically extravagant position which could, not too unjustly, be called "Realism about nonexistent objects of reference". Philosophers who have held such rabidly realistic positions, even very recently, have concluded[1] that most individuals that we do, can, or could talk or think about do not actually exist, either because they no longer exist, or do not yet exist, or because they never did, would, or could exist.

The puzzle which has driven philosophers to such extreme views will be the central subject matter of this book. This puzzle can be stated most plainly in terms of the following set of claims, each one of which looks individually plausible, even attractive, although jointly they seem to yield an inconsistency.

1. Some statements of the form 'N does not exist' are straightforwardly true.
2. These statements are singular negative subject – predicate statements of the logical form '~FN'.
3. They are strictly *about* those very items to which the singular terms in the position of 'N' refer and *not* about those singular *terms* themselves.
4. The property which is denied by the "does not exist" – part of the statements is intimately related to the serious use of the existential quantifier, so that nothing about which we can say that there *is* such a thing can be consistently said to be utterly nonexistent – *in the same breath.*
5. From any statement of the form '~FN' where 'N' is a singular term and 'F' a predicate and '~' a plain negation, it logically follows, as long as we are speaking in the same vein, that there exists an x such that ~Fx.

It *seems* clear that the above five claims together entail the conclusion that some true statements logically imply the contradiction *that there exists an x, such that x does not exist and there does not exist any x, such that x does not exist.* But of course, a true statement can never logically imply a false statement let alone a contradictory one! Standard proposed solutions to this puzzle turn on withdrawing one or more members of the inconsistent set of initially plausible claims. Of course, it would be absurd to deny 1. One cannot just ban controversies over the existence of a single identified item, or disallow by a fiat a negative settlement of such a controversy. Singular existentials may be difficult (or even impossible) to prove, but they are surely capable of significant and true denial.

Rejection of 2, however, has been the most popular option. Negative existentials could never be of the plain subject–predicate form, it has been argued insistently, because existence is not a predicate or, at least, not a first-level predicate. Though powerful and seemingly attractive, this view leads to such counter-intuitive results as the following: since only propositional functions or Fregean concepts have the property of existence, to assert about a single individual, e.g. Quine, that he exists would be strictly gibberish. Descartes' first certainty (*sum*) may not be the first or

may not be so unassailable, but it is definitely not ungrammatical as a singular thought! I shall discuss various versions of this line of solutions in Chapter 2 in order to show how it goes against the fundamental constraint that existence-affirmations or existence-denials must in some sense be *about* the same real or fictional item which figures (outside or inside the fiction) as the topic of straightforward first-level predication. When, after relating to an half-credulous audience the life story of the Hindu divine hero Krishna, I go on to assert that *he* did or did not exist, I may have changed my stance or style of talking but I most certainly have not changed the *subject*. Also, rather convincing arguments have been produced in recent years against the dogma that existence is not a first-level predicate of individuals.[2]

The next most popular solution has been to give up claim 3 and insist that singular existence-denials are singular but meta-linguistic. This need not be the crude reconstrual of "Pegasus does not exist" as meaning "Nothing was ever called 'Pegasus'" (for a pub or a pug could have been so called). It could be a sophisticated piece of news about how the history of that particular use of the name does not lead us back to a genuine baptism of an actual referent. Though this "solution" is blessed by Frege, we shall see in Chapter 2 that there are grave objections to such meta-linguistic paraphrases of singular existentials. Rejection of either 2 or 3, generally, tends to be based upon a tendency to violate the following essential requirement:

> *It must be possible on a relevant occasion to use the singular term forming the subject-term of the sentence competently but leaving open the question whether or not it has a real referent.*[3]

If we succumb to the temptation to rephrase all existential singular statements as either quantified or meta-linguistic (or both), then we cannot, after gathering a lot of information about a certain particular referent *R*, ever go on to ask, "But, does *R* really exist?"

Hence the pull towards solutions which retain 1, 2 and 3 but give up 4. The particular quantifier ("for some *x*") has nothing to do with existence, a champion of the substitutional reading of quantifiers could radically insist,[4] or it secures only a minimal being – not the full-blooded existence which the existence-predicate captures. I have deep sympathies with this view but I do wish to retain some close link between the particular quantifier and the existence-predicate. "Exists *x*" sounds fine to me as a pronunciation of "$(\exists x)$". With whatever degree of seriousness or playfulness we might make the predicative statement "Fa", *as long as we are talking in the same vein*, we must be prepared, with the same degree of commitment, to make the corresponding existential statement "$(\exists x)(Fx)$" too. Also, distinguishing levels of being seems to be a risky business.

Finally, all sorts of logics could be developed by dropping 5, or the unrestricted use of *existential generalisation* as an inference-rule. But the "Free"-dom of such logics does not seem all that inviting to me. It is one thing to be *aware* of the existence-assumptions of ordinary talk and quite another thing to *drop* these assumptions, or to require as a rule that they should be made explicit. The development of

Free-logics is in itself of considerable formal interest.[5] But just for the sake of smoothing away difficulties in the traditional square of opposition, or filling up truth-value gaps, it would be preposterous to construe all fictional names as referring to the same null-entity, or to assign arbitrary truth-values to sentences containing such names, or to withhold the assignment of any truth-values to all of them. In solving our puzzle I shall try to shun such specially devised logics. We do not seem to need logics without existence-assumptions while speaking seriously about the actual world. Fictional discourse imitates actual-world talk. Hence, in order to be faithful to the inside-the-pretence point of view of such discourse, we should avoid devising any special logic for understanding it. Unless we challenge the premise that ordinary by and large world talk can get by without a Free Logic, or reject the idea that fiction talk, simulates *all* the basic logico-semantic and conversational features of actual-world talk, the above seems to me to be a sound argument for eschewing a Free Logic for interpreting either inside-the-fiction remarks or singular negative existentials, which I take to be a bit of fiction talk spilling over into world talk. We do not give up the existence-assumption of singular terms *within* fiction talk, and the question of giving it up in real-world talk does not arise. It is when we blend the two stances that we are tempted to feel as if we are speaking of a single thing when, at the same time, there is after all no single thing that we are speaking of. But as far as possible I will try to resist this paradoxical temptation.

Sometimes, of course, the mystery of the puzzle has been attributed not to any of the above claims but to inadequate understanding of the *negation* involved in "N does *not* exist" across which existential generalisation has been effected. That negation might be such as to make us deny not the predicated property of the subject in the embedded proposition but deny that any proposition was at all expressed by the use of the embedded part. But this solution, or its variants, soon transpires to be *meta-linguistic* because one has to refer (under the accepted analysis of existence-denials) to the part that follows the negation (namely "N exists") and say about that string of words that it fails to express any proposition. Otherwise one will somehow have to describe the proposition which would have been expressed if "N" had a real bearer and say that such a proposition does not exist. But it is not at all clear how this can be done without making the statement meta-linguistic in effect.

However, there is some truth in this line of thought. The negation in existence-denials *has* to be special. My suggestion is that it involves us in a shift of language-games. By a "language-game", I mean roughly what Wittgenstein meant by that beautifully plastic expression:[6] a more or less rule-bound operation with language carried out by a group of people; a style of talking agreed upon by, and emerging out of, the linguistic practice of an open set of speakers and listeners with mutually understood conversational intentions and goals. Now, talking truthfully and informatively about spatio-temporally identifiable, concrete, particulars of the real world is surely the primary style of talking. But it is not the *only* style. We can take leave from this factual language-game and play the language-game of making up a joke, telling or recounting a fictional story, imaginatively or in a make-believe fashion participating in the world of ancient myths, or reporting a dream or hallucinatory experience from a first-person point of view. On such occasions, the speaker's reference, in so far as it is sharable and communicable, should always be looked at against the background of the kind of discourse in which the referring takes place. What counts as true or false within such discourse, of course, would depend partially upon how much factual discourse the make-believe discourse carries over or simulates, and what sort of new referents it creates.

Often the story-teller or the dream-describer "creates" his or her own targets of singular reference (i.e. makes it fictional that some actual items are named and uniquely identified) within the appropriate language-game. Of course, *within* the appropriate fiction every single item talked about *exists* (except when some items are introduced as imaginary even inside the story, or a further fiction is narrated by a fictional person). But sometimes when items from the real world migrate into the world of a novel, or painting or dream, items identified inside the make-believe also exist outside it. *What* we say about them in the novel may be partially imaginary, but that we say those things about *them* – those very real-worlders – is the plain truth.

As a result, the referential repertoire of a particular game of make-believe can be and hence *can always be suspected to have been* a mixed bag of some genuinely singled-out real items and some items of pure fiction or fantasy. So the possibility always remains that an item talked about in a fictional language-game may turn out to *be* (and not merely be based on) an object of the actual world, such as Napoleon in *War and Peace* and London in the *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. We must, however, guard ourselves against confusing this possibility with the apparently harmless suggestion that even a *native* resident of a fictional world, e.g. Natasha in *War and Peace* or Professor Moriarty in the Holmes stories (in so far as the item does not have inconsistent properties attributed to it), could *possibly* be real. It will be shown that no such possibility exists. What is originally intended as a purely fictional item remains necessarily nonexistent, in spite of resembling an actual or possible entity in nearly every respect. Even the possibility of a massive accidental fit with a real-world item (contrary to the referential intentions of the author of the fiction) would not make an invented name or description originally intended to be fictional, pick out a possible-worlder. But more of this later. In any case, since there always remains the possibility of our mistaking a guest-item from factual discourse for a native of some purely fictional discourse, revealing such a mistake can be worthwhile. Thus it can become informative to assert that Stalin or Cleopatra really existed, especially for someone who has only read semi-fictional literary works about those historical figures. Similarly, we walk into the relevant game of make-believe in order to talk predicatively about Hamlet. While walking out of the game of make-believe, we might want to bring that item back with us into *bona fide* world-talking, thinking that perhaps all along it was a guest from factual discourse – but often, as in this case we find that we fail. It is this failure which is recorded in the mixed idiom of singular negative existentials.

If the stock of things that can be talked about in one language-game were completely exclusive of those that we can refer to in another such game, then existence-affirmations would always be either unsurprising and true (when made *inside* a single game) or routinely false (when made *across* games). But in actual practice, we can always pick out a single individual inside the context of a novel, or hallucination or film and, coming out of it, enquire about that very individual whether it is a native member of the class of "created" referents of the game of make-believe or happens to be a guest-item from factual discourse. The crucial semantic-communicational marvel here is how that very individual can still be available for singular reference even when one has avowedly come out of its home-game. This, I think, can only be accounted for by making room for a *Master-Language-Game* which is played primarily with the object of asking such simple game-crossing existence-questions. Negative results of such existence-searches naturally have to be understood as moves in two simultaneous language-games or, as I prefer to say, moves in a Master-Game which can straddle several such styles of discourse. In the opening chapter I try to develop in some detail the idea of these various language-games overlooked by a special over-arching game of asking and answering singular existence-questions.

After sketching out this plurality of our speech patterns, I intend to come back to the original puzzle and show that the sketched framework can solve the puzzle *without* giving up any of its components' intuitive claims. The apparently innocuous qualification: "*in the same breath*" – at the end of the fourth claim – provides me with an escape route. My pious adherence to an objectually committed existential generalisation is confined to each individual game, except the Master-Game. "Everything exists" is trivially true *within* each ordinary level of discourse. But it is nontrivially true in the Master-Game that for some x, x does not really exist, because between the quantifier and the use of the existence-predicate there has been a switch of games. We are no longer speaking *in the same breath*. If we speak of something, it must exist in at least one game of discourse. But there are games which make available, for singular reference, items that do not exist in at least one other game of discourse.

NOTES

[1] See Richard Routley's *Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond* (1979), and Terence Parson's *Nonexistent Objects* (1980). More recently Palle Yourgrau (1987) has maintained "that talk of the dead, not talk of fiction, is the proper introduction to nonexistents". I maintain in Chapter 3 that perished particulars belong to the real world – only in its past. What the dead suffer can be called, after Indian Logic, posterior absence rather than nonexistence. Hence it is misleading to introduce the problem of nonexistents with them. Thus the above presentation of the "slope" argument for objective nonexistents does not represent *my* view. Also see Chapter 1, section 1.1, for a preview of my treatment of our discourse about deceased and yet-to-come individuals.

[2] See, for example, Nathan Salmon's *Existence* (1987).

[3] See Michael Dummett's *Existence* (1985).

[4] See Orenstein (1978) for a sustained attack against linking up existence with the "some" quantifier.

[5] See Lambert (1981), Woods (1974) and Schock (1968) for competent overviews of logics without existence-assumption.

[6] Wittgenstein, when listing some of the countless language-games in his famous remark 23 (Investigation/1) himself mentions "making up a story and reading it" and also "describing the appearance of an object". In remark 44, he imagines language-games which will require the actual *presence* of the named object for the name to be meaningful, and obviously places statements about now-nonexistent particulars like Excalibur (after the sword has been broken to pieces) in a language-game which has no such requirement. These and other uses by the father of the notion of language-games will confirm that my use of that notion in the present context is not an undue extension of that widely used conceptual tool.

CHAPTER 1
THE SCAFFOLDING FOR A SOLUTION

Play is a thing by itself. The play-concept as such is of a higher order than is seriousness. For seriousness seeks to exclude play, whereas play can very well include seriousness.

Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, p. 45

1.1 GAME (1): TALK ABOUT THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL WORLD

To start with, we have to attend to the most straightforward and naturally paradigmatic language-game of talking about spatio-temporally locatable and datable individuals. Let us call this game *"Game (1)"*. to signify its primacy, which, if not ontologically uncontroversial, is at least intuitive. The original psychological roots of reference can surely be traced back to this game. Its *bona fide* items would be concrete spatio-temporal particulars such as books, flowers, birds, people, motorcars, houses, countries and limbs of living bodies. Material such as mud, water or sugar is also talked about, not merely in the unsorted generic fashion but also riding on count-nouns – "blobs", "drops", and "lumps" – bit by bit in the singled-out fashion.

There is, however, no end to the philosophical problems regarding the criteria of identity, etc., even with these apparently innocent articles of reference. Artifacts have identity conditions which are different from those of organisms. Continuity over time for plants, or that over space for roads, may pose exceedingly tough problems to the logical analyst of natural language. Events, of course, like a particular dropping of a stone, a famine, an earthquake or the fall of an empire can cover very brief or very large stretches of time. The same action can be counted differently from the side of the agent and from the side of the recipient. Problems of a separate kind arise with items which show traits of both events and entities, e.g. waterfalls. Whirlpools, for example, can be given proper names in spite of the possibility that they can have a temporally intermittent history, can perhaps divide into two and again merge back into one, or reappear in a slightly different place after vanishing for some time. The same named wind comes back each year. (The sky, I would like to think, is an item of this language-game, although I have no clear answers to questions like: "Is the sky in London the same as the one in Delhi? Or, has it got a shape, like the inside of a dome?" These questions make us suspect that it might be a merely phenomenal entity, although there is a certain "publicness" about it which

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 9–31.

it shares with rainbows.) Waves of an ocean or flames of a fire are surely objective items, though difficult to individuate. It would be a mistake to expel shadows out of this game because they are not only publicly available for reference but they also have particular location in space and time. They occupy places even if they do not prevent other things from occupying the same places. They have objective but *two*-dimensional shapes which can get distorted by interference.[1] Then there are vague objects like a certain pile of trash or an automobile, about which identity-questions seem to have no clear-cut "yes/no" answers. To try to give a watertight criterion of inclusion in a class of particulars recognisable as items of this game is too ambitious even for a meticulously descriptive metaphysician.

For our purposes, we can rest satisfied with the general characterisation that whatever is an historically (maybe omnitemporally or just for an instant) available basic particular – a concrete, and more or less public substance or event – is a designatable item in this game. When we are playing this game (i.e. both we and our hearers are consciously talking about the common and the only world where we share location), we cannot take "Sherlock Holmes" or "wisdom" as directly referring expressions for two different reasons. Though a concrete particular – in the story – Sherlock Holmes cannot be a game (1) item because we do not take talk about him as seriously belief-expressing or belief-demanding. Although we believe in wisdom, and speak seriously of it, we cannot refer to it in this game because it is not a spatio-temporal particular. Even our use of numbers in this game must be attributive. When, for instance, we say, "The number of players in a football match is usually 22", it would be preposterous to assume that we are referring to an entity, namely, the abstract natural number 22, by our use of the number name. Similarly, when in this game we say, "Selflessness is a rare virtue", our statement most naturally deserves a pro-nominalist reinterpretation along the lines of "Very few people can be selfless."

Of course even in game (1) we would be inclined to quantify over the predicate-position. Comments like the following seem to demand such quantification: "Jennifer has become everything that her mother did not want her to be." From this, can we jump to the conclusion that properties also count as individuals in game (1)? I think that would be overhasty. In order to make room for the frank Platonism of conversational English, I have therefore categorised all individuating references to universals, features, kinds and other abstract entities as moves in a separate language-game, namely game (4). Whether or not one would treat game (4) as just an extension of game (1) seems to be largely a matter of philosophical taste and temperament. While I am an unashamed realist about non-particular entities like obsession with sin or meta-mathematics, I would like to keep singular reference to them semantically segregated from singular reference to spatio-temporal particulars. Surely we can mix the two styles of talking, making reference to items from both. Thus we can speak of obsession with sin as what Kant; and Kierkegaard shared, or of meta-mathematics as what Russell and Gödel had both worked on. But it is somewhat dangerous to eliminate the distinction between the two games altogether, lest we slip back to the erroneous two-name theory of predication. When

I say that Kant was obsessed with sin, I am naming Kant; but I am not *naming* obsession with sin because I am playing game (1) where obsessions are not nameable. The logical structure of "Descartes had a quick wit" needs to be distinguished from that of "Descartes had a wart" – even if both comments are made with equally earnest claims of factuality.

As such, every item of this game seems to have the most uncontrovertible claim to existence. They are bits of nature, living or non-living. But what happens when some particular item ceases to exist, and we talk about it in the past tense or report its destruction in the present? Corresponding to the significant pair of problems with our predicative talk about absolutely nonexistent items, and singular reports of their absolute nonexistence, we seem to have, inside game (1), a new pair of problems concerning (a) reference to once-existent and – more disturbingly – yet-to-exist objects and (b) denial of existence now. Here, let me briefly anticipate some of the results of a subsequent chapter (Chapter 3) about this issue.

Suppose, we give up the over-restrictive rule that "*a* is (was or will be) f" uttered now, in this game, presupposing the existence of *a* now (at the time of utterance); and adopt a revised rule, namely that "*a* is (was or will be) f", presupposing that *a* should exist at the time in which it is stated to be f. Let us also permit the following apparent exceptions: first, intentional predicates like "... is remembered", "... is insulted" which do not require that the objects named in the gaps be existent at the time when the statement asserts that they satisfy these predicates; second, relational predicates standing for Cambridge changes; for instance, Sally's first child can make Sally's deceased mother a grandmother now; third, the cases where the designator used is such that it was not earned by the individual designated, at the time in question. "The next John Locke Lecturer was born in America" does not presuppose that at the time of his birth the person designated by the subject-term exists *as* the next John Locke Lecturer.[2]

But does "Euston Arch no longer exists" or "John Mackie is dead" fall under any of these exempted categories? Neither of them uses acquired names or descriptions of their subjects, or ascribes any intentional-predicate or any Cambridge change-relational-predicate involving a non-contemporary object. Yet both make a present-tense extensional predication about Euston Arch and John Mackie and should, therefore, presuppose that they now exist, even though that is precisely what they deny.

Some philosophers (e.g. the classical realist logicians of India) would not view the problem in this light at all. The statement that a pool seen in a mirage does not really exist has no logical resemblance, according to them, to the statement of absence (pre-originatory or post-destruction) of a real item. It is one thing to expose unreality and another to notice the present absence of a part of reality. We can, of course, have hallucinations about once-existent objects or create fictions about people long dead. But these entities would then enter our dreams or fiction just like contemporary *existent* entities.[3]

More acute problems crop up with not-yet-existent referents of names and definite descriptions. Logicians like Quine can, all too easily, take an Olympian

God's eye point of view and judge our ontological commitments to be unthwarted just in case a past, present or future value is available for our existentially bound variables. The parents who decide to call their unborn child "Chris", and make statements like "This is Chris's room" with the genuine intention of referring to a unique individual *are* actually referring to him or her. But are they? In the event of an early miscarriage, they would have to be described as merely *thinking* that they were referring without actually doing so. There are problems about this timeless picture of nameable individuals, especially when it ignores the ontic openness of the future.[4] Unlike those past items that can, at best, be epistemologically indeterminate (all means for finding out whether or not a past entity was such and such might be lost), future items resemble fictional ones in their essential incompleteness about predicates which are quite relevant to their sort. Hence, Geach seems to be right: "You can't name the not yet existent: you can have a name (ready) for it but not a name *of* it."[5]

This subtle distinction might transpire to have far-reaching consequences for our position regarding "tensed" as opposed to absolute denials of existence.

Tensed denials are the only intra-game singular negative existentials, if we call them existentials at all. In so far as other games, e.g. the game of fiction-making, emulate this model, we shall have tensed denials in them as well. These occur when in stories palaces are not yet built, or heroines die or a foul creature is shot dead.

Finally, not all apparent reference to fictional or phenomenal items need take us outside this game. Some such references could be merely attributive. When, for example, we say things like (a) "My friend is as clever as Sherlock Holmes", or (b) "Your face looks prettier than that of the Mona Lisa" or (c) "He is quite a Uriah Heep", we are very much within game (1). The comparison of real-life persons with fictional characters seems to yield more naturally to a counter-factual construal. Thus, (a) can be re-phrased as "If there were a real person having all the properties of Holmes, my friend would be as clever as he." But apart from the clouds that surround subjunctive conditionals, it may not be easy to expel all direct reference to Holmes while talking about *his* properties.

This sort of cross-game talk is to be clearly distinguished from the cross-game talk which will be used exclusively for serious tenseless existence-denials of a particular game-bound individual outside its own game. We shall return to this latter sort of trans-game talk towards the end of this description and division of language-games.

1.2 GAME (2): TALK IN AND ABOUT FICTIONS

Since we shall discuss the problems of this game very elaborately in Chapter 4, let me just outline its conventions here. First, we must distinguish between story-telling and story-re-telling, i.e. between an author's setting up of a fictional story-line and the reader's rehearsal of it, albeit fallibly, by way of repeating all or part of it to others and discussing the sequence of events or personalities of its characters, etc. (It may, however, be difficult to decide whether a particular, creatively retold version of a story is correctly claimed to be a new story based on the old.)

There is a complicated way in which[6] statements made by Dickens presuppose a mock continuity with the spatio-temporal setup of game (1), branching off from it only, as it were, at a certain point. This holds true of works of fiction in varying degrees. There are those so-called historical novels and plays (e.g. *War and Peace*, *Henry VIII*) which take their characters partly or mostly from real life. They maintain a limiting faithfulness to actual history using some place names (even pure fictions often use these), etc. that refer to individuals of game (1) but others which pick out people and places from the purely fictional resources of game (2). So-called autobiographical novels also show this feature of weaving facts into fiction. If the author is understood to be writing pure fiction, the referential commitments have to be judged accordingly. It would be incorrect to say that "Christminster" (in *Jude the Obscure*) or "Strickland" (in *The Moon and Sixpence*) refers to Oxford or Gaugin, although many of their descriptions fit the actual entity. This, incidentally, shows that "referring to x" cannot *always* be replaced by "having x in mind". Such names refer to items native to game (2) which at best have a strong resemblance to those of game (1).

In one sense, however, whatever the story-creator says (and does not contradict later on or in the "committed" part of the story) is bound to be true in this game.

> A sentence uttered makes a world appear where all things happen as it says they do (W.H. Auden).[7]

But there is a gradually weakening set of restrictions – historical, geographical, causal or, at any rate, logical – depending again upon the author's stance under whose constraints even the story-teller has to work. If, in a serious historical novel, we find the hero suddenly vanishing into thin air and then reappearing a great distance away, we cannot complain that the author stated something *false*, but we can bring some charge against him – perhaps the charge of absurdity, or incongruence. But very similar feats would be tolerated, and indeed desired, in another type of fiction which grants the author partial leave from natural causal laws. Science fiction flouts or stretches the known causal laws of the actual world to varying extents. Those authors who talk about going back and forth in time hardly abide by even our basic conceptual rules; although they cannot disobey rules as basic as: "There can be a cat without a grin but no grin without a cat" – a principle which the Cheshire Cat flouts in Alice's dream story. In ordinary fairy tales we usually give up natural and causal strictures but continue to follow rules of logic. Creatures like werewolves break non-logical rules of necessity as to the identity of biological natural kinds. But it is difficult to imagine how a story can even start, or continue, about a round-square cupola (no game (2) is played by telling or reading entertaining gibberish like "'twas brillig and the slithy Toves") until at least some story-line or narrative structure appears.

There is another non-literal level of judging the truth of a story. Kafka's famous story tells us of a man who suddenly turns into an arthropod. It is not at all like a fairy story or science fiction. Yet, our refined sense of reality restrains the revolt of the robust sense, and we can accept Kafka as expressing deep truths about human experience.

The key concept, as we shall notice at the end, is that of suitability of designation. This should always be sought in relation to the specific sub-species of the species of language-game which is being played. "The catless grin appeared in the sky and Alice talked to it" comes out as false (or truth-valueless) not only if we apply game (1) criteria of reference to it, but also in the story itself when Alice wakes up from her reverie. Within game (2) Alice plays another game of describing her long dream (which we shall categorise later as game (3)), and it is only in that embedded game that "the grin" is a straightforwardly referring expression.

While the statements of an original fiction are usually appraised as "credible" or "fantastic" or "lifelike" (strictly, automatically true), the story-retelling sentences can be plainly appraised as "true" or "false". Thus, it becomes possible within game (2) not only to speak referentially of Othello and Tweedledum but also to speak truly or falsely about them. It is this sort of discourse that Freud takes part in when he psychoanalyses a fictional personality like Norbert Hanold or a Shakespearean hero.[8]

The items of game (2) are notorious for their indeterminateness regarding properties about which their creators neither speak nor leave any clues. Thus, statements like, "Gabriel Oak had three white shirts" are not undecidable in the sense that it requires superhuman critical and historical research (into Thomas Hardy's diaries, perhaps) to find out whether they are true, but they lack truth-value in the sense that Oak himself is undetermined between either having or not having three such shirts. This raises serious doubt about the alleged particularity of fictional entities. But this incompleteness of game (2) items is precisely what makes them unavailable as items in game (1); therefore, this is the same as their nonexistence and, hence, not reportable in this game. Inside the fictional stance of game (2) such statements do have truth-values even though one does not have adequate evidence to discover what they are. Like real-life human beings and material objects, fictional items also have – *within game (2)* – some of their features undisclosed to any knower.

We shall later see that this game is *parasitic* on game (1) in the sense that those who play it nondeceptively pretend that they are playing game (1) in supposing that its items occupy positions in the actual world. The exact nature of this pretence is somewhat baffling and we shall try our best (in Chapter 4) to penetrate it. Sometimes, the fiction gives us dates and places where we can never hope to find any such items. In the relevant game (2) itself we can distinguish between the truth values of "Sherlock Holmes's pipe existed" and "Sherlock Holmes's wife existed", but both statements would be equally unworthy of truth evaluation outside the game. There is all the more point in calling a fictional entity nonexistent, the more imitative the fiction is of game (1). And, as we have seen earlier, there are different degrees of such dependence on, or claimed continuity with, the actual world for different types of stories. As this dependence decreases along the scale, a judgement of nonexistence about a fictional item becomes more and more pointless. The incompleteness problem, therefore, is not so much of a problem under this language-game construal of fictional discourse. Within such a framework we can lightheartedly appeal to a Meinongian sort of a reply to the objection that "Dr. Jekyll" does not refer to any entity because there is no answer to the question whether that putative person loves apples or not. We might say: "From the fact that many questions about fictional items have no correct answers, it does not follow that none of them can be definitely answered, or that fictional items have properties only in the metaphysically 'watered down' sense of 'properties' or 'having'. Along with borrowing locations and parts of actual history from game (1), a particular game (2) also has to borrow real-life properties and other abstract items from game (4). Thus, the particular tune that a heroine from a novel might hum could well be an actual tune composed by a real composer: the tune then will *exist*, but the humming will not be a real event *outside* game (2)."

Here we must add a cautionary note. We use the word "characters" loosely for items of this game; but as Chapter 4 will tell us in some detail, the characters "created" by Dickens are, unlike game (2) items corresponding to them, quite real. They are abstract literary entities or game (4) items. Although I have been generally claiming that fictional talk more or less simulates real-world talk in existence-assumption of its singular terms, it would be foolishly presumptuous to try to codify all the rules of make-believe or "pretending that" upon which game (2) can be based. Nearly every rule of logic and every assumption of commonsense metaphysics is deliberately broken by great story-tellers. When Italo Calvino's story asserts within game (2) that one particular knight – inside his elaborate armour – was nonexistent – while all the other characters including Charlemagne were existent, we may try to interpret him – somewhat humourlessly – as talking dramatically about an imperceptible bodiless hollow being. But such forced interpretations do not always work. So we have to see later (in Chapter 4) how to deal with fictions displaying their own fictionality or with fictions some of whose items are introduced as nonexistent. My claim that existential generalisation holds within game (2) would perhaps lead to contradiction in their case. And this is one respect in which game (2) seems to be somewhat unlike game (1). Fictions are not always afraid of logical contradictions.

1.3 GAME (3): PHENOMENA DESCRIPTION

This is another parasitic game which models its items after the items of game (1) – not so much because we consciously imagine[9] or make believe that there are such items, but because we seemingly or through an aesthetic mode of make-believe *perceive* them with some immediacy and, even if only for a short while, take them to be items of game (1) (this is not equally true about *all* items of this game, as we shall see towards the end of this section). That is why, even after the mistake or the delusion is detected and we learn that there never were any such objects, we continue to talk about them *as we had perceptually experienced them*, in ways very similar to those of game (1) but without the game (1) claim that what we talk about is (or was, or will be) out there in the absolute sense. Unlike the merely imagined or talked about sea-serpent, the hallucinated snake impinges upon our sensory receptivity with the same particularity and immediacy as would be displayed by a real snake which is correctly perceived. The claim of singularness for the subject-term

of negative existential judgements which expose vivid hallucinations seems harder to dismiss.

Avoiding epistemological controversies (e.g., between naive and scientific realism), it is possible to maintain, at any rate at a commonsense level (the only level relevant for the purpose of describing the conceptual scheme behind the several ways of talking about things), that items of this game are not merely sometimes *anchored in* or *caused by* or *reliable representations of* items of game (1) but that, in some cases, they can be found out to have been *themselves* items of game (1). When from suspected illusion we pass on to a state of certain perceptual knowledge, we do not normally say that the object we saw (but feared that it might be unreal) is *of* a real physical object, but simply that, at least in many cases, it *is* a real physical object. There may lurk some conversational inexactness in this usage, but that is how we talk and understand talk. And here we are concerned with the referential framework of our *talk* about perceived nonexistents.

Game (3), thus, is the game where dreamt-of places,[10] immediately sensed objects (the experience of which the objective veridicality is *in question*) – hallucinated pink rats etc. – are identified and re-identified not only in private memory but also, with appropriate linguistic props, in public conversation. They can be picked out through derived reference by singular expressions like: "The fairy my daughter meets every night in her dreams." When your analyst asks you, "That snake which you saw last year and once this month during your panic-attacks, does it move or does it stay still?" he plays game (3) and refers to the same nonexistent snake that you can refer to, if you talk about it, by obviously picking up his reference from your dream descriptions. Surely, he can never fully visualise the particular snake as well as you can. But that is nothing special about a dreamt or hallucinated snake. When Mr X comes back from a place where Mr Y has never been and tells him about a particular river which Mr Y has never read or heard about, of which Mr X cannot even produce a picture, Mr Y can, afterwards, still refer to that river – that particular river – as "The river which my friend Mr X saw when he went to such-and-such a place." If an account of such a derived reference has always to be in terms of existentially quantified beliefs, that will not be special for nonexistent, merely phenomenal objects of reference. There is, on the face of it, no additional hurdle in picking up references from another person where the referent is an object of hallucination or a dream.

It is not usual to give names to most of the items of this game because we do not play this game often, or for long, and do not usually need to refer to them repeatedly[11] except, perhaps, in some areas of experimental or pathological psychology. But we hear of recurrent hallucinations the objects of which are then given proper names. Thus "Fata Morgana" was the name of the mirage-land which could be "seen", on windless days in the straits between Sicily and Italy, as a sub-oceanic city complete with palaces, roads and towers.

Dream objects are parasitical on game (1) in a different and more intimate way than fictional ones. They claim greater resemblance to game (1) items (some dream entities, it seems, can claim to be complete as well. Can't we say about a dreamt-of house: "That house must have had a floor of a particular colour, though I didn't notice whether it was red or not"?) And that is why their failure to be items of game (1) is more tragic. When we read or listen to a story we hardly ever forget that we are playing game (2). In a dream, at least during it, we seriously mislocate the characters in game (1). Game (3), nevertheless, does not have to be played *during* a dream or an illusory experience. Probably we *cannot* play it during such an experience (since we do not communicate or follow any rules while we are asleep, it may be impossible to play any language-game during a dream). But game (3) items are usually at least once assumed to be items of game (1) (except in the case of patently fantastic films), although to play game (3) with an appropriate intention is already to come out of this state of misidentification and to refer to dreamt or apparent particulars *as* phenomenal or apparent. Only then do they become suitable designata for such expressions as "That delicious pie I ate in my dream", etc.

In dreams, as in historical novels, real-life individuals often reappear with a changed look. Someone looking and behaving like A might be identified by the dreamer as B. It is very difficult to spell out what makes me feel that I am still myself and John is still John while, in a dream, I might be looking and behaving like John and John like me! A man might appear as a snake or a woman as a plant. Who a certain dream-person is, is usually but not necessarily dependent upon the ostensible features identified during the dream experience. This makes it difficult to decide whether to answer an existence question affirmatively when it is asked about a particular that is identified in a dream with an existent particular but showing completely different characteristics.

Dream items (like the cold water of a river I step into) might have *causal* sources in game (1) items (like a cold draught on my feet through the sheets) which do not make them existent in the latter game any more than the supposed historical *basis* of a hero in a novel makes him an existent person.

I must mention, though, that when I talk of phenomenal objects I am not speaking of pains, tingles, sensations of blue etc.[12] These are experiences which, even if mental, are talked about as items of game (1), perhaps under the heading of mental *events*. Even the so-called "sense-data" (distinguished from sensations in a scholastic way) which are lifted away from the external world and usually given neutral status for the convenience of philosophical speculations are not the intended items of this game. We do not discuss such entities in ordinary parlance. They might be talked about in a separate game of philosophy-talk. Without prejudging the issue as to whether there are sense-data or whether they can have a constitutive identity with physical objects, I want to record simply the fact that we talk about ordinary perceived objects such as cats and dogs, rivers and hills, people and their limbs, even about their mental qualities and physical actions, without presupposing that these are real individuals of the physical world when, for instance, we talk about individuals seen in a dream, in a painting or film, or even in a play or impersonation. When a girl convinced of the mythical nature of Santa Claus sees a Santa Claus giving gifts in a party and tells him "You do not exist", she is addressing a game (3) item and not the man who has dressed up as Santa.

Well-known epistemological complications arise about the private "speakables" of this game on which we have so far concentrated. But they are not the only balls that are hit in this game. Both the title given to this game, and the discussion so far, may suggest that it is played only when we talk of objects of our incompletely communicable subjective experiences. But since people, landscapes, animals, houses and events which are unreal but not *primarily* fictional (in the strict sense of being accessible through linguistic descriptions contained in fictional narratives) are, nevertheless, *seen* in films and paintings or realistic sculptures, we should count these too as items of this game. We must be careful to distinguish between the physical objects in which we see them, e.g. screens, canvases, chunks of marble or bronze, and the items which are seen in them, in this special representational sense of "seeing in". But the existence and nature of these physical "props", via which our pretence to talk about items depicted by them gains reference and meaning, create important dissimilarities between our talk about *them* and our talk about objects of our own or even other's dreams. We shall discuss these matters in Chapter 6.

Some paintings depict real people and places, with or without some imaginary properties being ascribed to them. Others depict purely imaginary people and places, drawing often but not always, upon existing legends or literary fictions. Whether the object depicted is real or unreal does not depend upon the causal background of the painting. A painter can portray Jesus or Alexander without Jesus or Alexander having sat for the portrait. Pointing to such a painting I can tell a child "That man there really existed", where my referring expression primarily picks out Christ or the Greek Emperor as a game (3) item – though not a *native* of that game. If I wish to say that the man who posed for the painting existed then I should choose some other form of utterance to avoid confusion. On the other hand a painter often depicts an imaginary woman using a real-life model as a sitter. The reality of the model notwithstanding, it will be appropriate to commit *that woman* to nonexistence because she might be visually identified as Athena or Madame Bovary. From the plausible assumption that there must *be* an object which one "sees in" the painting, even if that object does not *exist* outside the canvas (or even inside the *canvas*), one could be led to the conclusion that there *are* visible and depictable objects which do not exist. "Such metaphysical contortions," Walton wisely remarks "are easily ridiculed, but they deserve sympathy and understanding" (Walton, 1990, p. 130). The idea behind game (3) is precisely this: trying to handle our talk about "seen" and represented unreals with sympathy but without metaphysical contortions.

1.4 GAME (4): TALK OF ABSTRACT ENTITIES AND TYPES

The outstanding feature of the fourth language game is that it is an independent game where the items have no tendency to simulate the items of game (1). It is not parasitical on game (1) in the way games (2) and (3) are. Our participation in this game invokes conceptual thinking rather than sense experience or visualisations. Second, its items are necessarily nonparticular; hence they raise no problems about

position (at least in space). All other games accept as nameable items only things which are unrepeatable tokens. Types, kinds, properties and styles become acceptable as targets of direct reference only in this game.

The most aristocratic individuals available in this game are numbers and other arithmetical and geometrical entities. Not all of them can be felicitously called "types" or "universals". Boolean Algebras and Hilbert Spaces count as abstract individuals. The first game does not allow existential generalizations over, or ineliminably singular reference to, abstract entities like triangles, points, prime numbers or a series of numbers etc. In this game alone we can make statements of singular existence like "There exists a prime number between 10 and 12" which can afford to be logically necessary. (Not all statements referring to numbers in this game are necessary e.g., "The number of planets in the solar system is greater than 8"). At least for the most honoured class of items here, existence, as well as possession of some other property can be necessary. But not all abstract objects[13] are so perfect and pure.

Type-entities like literary styles or sonatas or philosophical schools of thought are most easily given names and described singularly in game (4). Expressions like "The Ninth Symphony", "The *Rāga* Bhairav", "The Modal System S_4", "The Theory of Descriptions" or "The Late Palladian" refer to abstract objects which exist as individuals and have empirical properties in this game. And our talk about them need not be taken as compendious ways of talking about actual performances, buildings, or token-sentences issued by individual philosophers. Their names do not succeed to designate tortuously via their instantiators or token-associates. "Duck-doughnuts" may be the name of a recipe which no one ever considered cooking. As a recipe it would be as real as the recipe for Jam Doughnuts. This is the game where "The concept horse" or "the sine function" may also stand for an object. But the items of this game, as we have formulated it, show a disturbing kind of heterogeneity. On the one hand, we have timeless existents such as numbers, on the other we get cultural constructs like the Elizabethan hero which seem to come into being and pass away (when a style becomes extinct or obsolete). Cubism started to exist at such-and-such a date when a painter painted such-and-such a picture (rather like the origination of a human being the exact cut-off point may, however, be controversial. But I am not so sure that if no buildings are built in a particular style any more, e.g. early Florentine, we shall say that the style itself has ceased to exist. Revivals of styles are surely possible. Do they then have a discontinuous temporal career? I feel a certain inclination towards Platonism in this respect. It seems plausible that a sport or a particular technique of fresco painting continues to exist after people have ceased to play it or paint in it.[14] Nevertheless, unlike mathematical abstracts, cultural abstracts do seem to have a history. These second-grade items of game (4) sometimes have other features to share with concrete items of game (1). But all the items of this game, both apparently created and uncreated show the common characteristic of existing on their own. We can, of course, concoct descriptions like "Hamlet's theorem" to which no abstract entity will be found to answer. Such expressions will either have to be split up and given

a Russellian contextual paraphrase, or placed in an appropriate game of fiction where a story is told about them. And since their mode of existing is totally different from that of the actual real-world particulars who exemplify them (I think even game (2) and game (3) particulars can do so; an unreal house can be built in a real style and a fictional hero can dress in an existent fashion), these abstract items do not fail to exist *outside* their game in spite of being unavailable in game (1). They do not claim or pretend to be spatio-temporal particulars, so their failure to be so does not count against their independent existence.

There is a completely different type of entity our talk about which has to be governed by the rules of this same game, namely, *characters* of fiction as complex types or clusters of properties about which some author has actually pretended that someone exemplified that very cluster. They will fall under the general subclass of abstract entities of literary criticism. (Their distinction from corresponding fictional items of game (2) will be defended in the section of Chapter 4 entitled *Creationism versus Platonism.*) The characters of the Cheshire Cat and Scarlet O'Hara really exist in literature. But no one *bears* or exemplifies those characters and that is why *that* cat and *that woman* (those concrete game (2) items) are nonexistent (i.e. unavailable in either game (1) or game (4). If we take the critic's statement, "Most weak women in English novels suffer unreciprocated love" as ranging over characters, then we cannot take "suffering love" *literally*. Characters (like synecdoches) do not *fall* in love. They can, in a complicated way, be *constituted* by falling in love.

Most abstract referents have their correlates (not strictly *instances* in every case) in game (1). For natural numbers we have collections of as many things, for geometric figures we have edges and surfaces of physical objects (roughly) of that shape, for concepts we have exemplifiers, for musical compositions we have interpretations and performances.[15] We have no actual items associated with characters of fiction, at least not with all of them, and we only have some game (2) items who have those characters.

Absence of a unitary criterion for abstractness will look like a severe shortcoming in the above discussion. It is very difficult to give such a definition except, perhaps, the working criterion that whatever entity is seriously talked about as real — is said to be (possibly) exemplified or instantiated or betokened by concrete particulars and yet — is neither a physical nor a mental concrete particular — is an item of game (4).

1.5 GAME* OR MASTER-GAME

The above list can, by no means, claim to be complete. There are other games like talking about our fantasies or false beliefs, the items of which are neither fictional nor phenomenal and obviously not game (4) items (because they are unreal). Ignoring them, let us come straight to the crucial point of our games framework.

We have seen that generally speaking every item of a game exists in its own game. If it does not exist in a game (except in the "tensed" sense of no longer, or not yet existing) it is neither available to be designated nor to be talked about. Thus,

if to talk is to talk *within* any of these games, we can never make true and tenseless statements by *using* a name and attaching the predicate "... does not exist" to it. The game which allows me to give it a name does not allow me to truly deny its existence, and the game which permits me to deny its existence does not have an item to be the subject of the denial. Except for tensed denials of existence of items picked out in game (1), which have their attendant problems,[16] we seem to have no game in which to accommodate true sentences like "Napoleon existed but Natasha did not" (in the context of *War and Peace*). It is for this very important purpose that we have made room for the master-game which, as it were, looks over all other games and allows us to wait until after we have picked up a particular item from one game to consider whether that item *exists*, i.e. is also available in game (1) or (4). It is the game that we play when we try to avoid playing any *one* game and yet make statements about individuals figuring in one or more of them, thus drawing on the referential facilities of all the other games. It is in this game that we phrase our worries and wonderment about whether something we have seen or felt or read about in a story was or is real. We pick out that thing by virtue of its membership of the class of items of games (3) or (2), and then try to look for it in game (1). When we fail to find it in game (1), we make such epistemologically momentous announcements like "That snake I saw was not real." But for the existence of this master-game, such statements could not be construed as singular and predicative without incoherence.

It is in this game that we make serious negative existential statements aimed at literal truth. We say about Batman that he does not exist or about the Hound of the Baskervilles that it does not exist. We also say that the very entity which is (in the context of the Holmes stories) Paddington Station exists (even outside that context). We are here operating with the serious master-game use of the predicate "exists". Chairs and cherry blossoms (unless the context of the *original* reference to them is fictional) exist in this sense because they exist in space and time and satisfy other criteria of public observability, persisting across interperceptual gaps, and are thought to be independent of experience, imagination or even language. Natural numbers and equilateral triangles exist because our talk about them does not borrow the idiom of game (1). Many of our statements involving exclusive reference to such abstract items seem to enjoy a status of eternal truth even beyond or independently of our proof procedures.

In this game we can not only say "Professor Moriarty did not exist" but also derive from it "There was an individual who did not exist", except that I would hesitate to call it an *existential* generalisation. Clearly, "there is" and "exists" are given absolutely different interpretations and finally the much-dreaded chasm between existential-quantification and existence-predication shows up. But, does that mean that I have given up the intuitive link between "being" and "there being"? Roughly, "There is an x" is disjunctively defined over all the games which Game* overlooks: "There is an item x which is referred to either in game (1) or in game (2) or (3) or (4) or ..." In other words, this would coincide with the sense of game-relative existence.[17] *Within* any ordinary game the predicate "exists" (if we look upon it as a

first-level predicate), will have a universal satisfaction range and could be defined as:

$$(\lambda x)(\exists y)(x = y).$$

In the master-game, however, "exists" is a genuine demarcating predicate of individuals with a non-empty inapplicability range. Yet, even here, we can try to express its sense through quantifying over the realistic games:

$$(\lambda x)(\text{in game (1) or (4)}(\exists y)(x = y)).$$

Thus, "A exists" in Game* could be defined as: "Either A is an item in game (1)[18] or an item in game (4)." It should be noticed that we don't allow any tenseless negative existential to be strictly singular inside the ordinary self-contained games, i.e. anywhere except in Game*.

But even within a game don't we have to deny the existence of a mistakenly described or identified particular? Don't we use apparently singular expressions to denote phoney items like Sherlock Holmes's wife only to assert *within* game (2) that she never existed? It is here that we forsake our hitherto faithful guide, namely, grammar, and begin to appeal to the so-called "deep structures". Such existence denials with apparently singular expressions typically occur in ordinary discourse when we rectify mistakes (in, say, story-retelling) or detect deceptions within a game. In game (1), for instance, one can be made to believe for a long time, (not as a make-believe) that one's grandfather had a fabulously rich step-sister called the Duchess of X. If later on, historical investigation proves all stories about her to have been purely concocted ones, we might be able to say, "the Duchess of X did not exist." But this I would not take as a statement about a fictional item of game (2), because "the Duchess of X" is not available as a *bona fide* name in either game (1) or game (2). It can be construed as one of those attributive names which are best explained by Russell's theory of disguised definite descriptions. We would give a flat quantificational reading of that negative existential as follows: "It is false that (there is an x such that she was called 'the Duchess of X' and was fabulously rich and for all y, if y was so called etc. then $y = x$)."

Similar room for definite descriptional reading of apparently singular subject terms of negative existentials must be left in all other games. Although mistakes in game (3) have often been thought to be either impossible to commit, or impossible to detect, I think I can misremember my dreams or confuse film items. In such cases there might be *apparent* singular expressions which are empty of reference even in game (3) and so deserve to be explained away.

In mathematics, too, we have, for the sake of *reductio* proofs, vacuous descriptions being used. We shall adopt the same Russellian policy about terms like "The even prime greater than 2." To be able to *name* an item nonexistent in one game we must be able to find it as an item existent in another actually played game. To put it with a touch of cross-cultural frivolity: we keep the *intra-game* tenseless existence denials for propitiating Russell and the *Nyāya*, whereas we preserve the *trans-game* singular existence denials in some way to console Meinong and Bhartṛhari.[19] Not

all earnest attempts at reference manage to be successful, and not all successful references need to be earnest or doxastically committed.

1.6 NOETIC STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER-GAME

I have called master-game utterances "serious" existence-appraisals. Now, game (1) utterances, too, are serious. They are, in a way, paradigms of doxastically committed utterances. As far as expressing beliefs or executing acts of assertion are concerned, game (1) and the master-game seem to be epistemically on a par. Why are we then unable to express our disbelief in the reality of Sherlock Holmes right away in game (1)?

The answer to this should have become obvious by now: because we cannot make clear, while expressing our beliefs about real things and properties of the world, which specific *fictional* detectives (or princesses or animals) we are denying the existence of. As far as the conventions of game (1) go, I would not be expressing (my belief in) any proposition by saying "Holmes never read philosophy." It will become clear subsequently why I reject tortuous paraphrases of the existence-denial which interprets it as expressing a belief about certain detective-like properties or about certain uses of the name "Holmes".

From the point of view of game (1), therefore, it does not make any difference whether you are denying the existence of Aladdin's lamp, or of Cerberus the dog, or of Vetāla the ghost (of the Sanskrit *Twenty-five Riddle Stories of Vetāla*). Since each of them is nothing, all the denials would be equally vacuous. More crucially, in game (1) you cannot even ask – let alone make sure – whether you and I are thinking of the *same* imaginary object when we both agree that we are thinking of Cerberus as nonexistent. In my master-game, on the contrary, you can ask and answer such identifying questions about imaginary objects.

G.E. Moore[20] realised the importance of this question long ago: "If there *is* no such thing as Aladdin's lamp, how can you and I both think of *it*?" Russell would have tried to stick to real-world discourse and explain it as you and I both thinking about the *same set of properties* which actually belong to nothing, that they belong to at least and at most one thing. But there are overwhelming considerations against such a reading, some of which will be discussed later in this book. For one thing, *uniqueness* of property-possession hardly captures *specificity* of reference. *Singleness is not singularity.* Besides, different people can "ascribe" different fictional properties to the same fictional object and yet think about the same one. Finally, neither you nor I need to *think that* Aladdin's lamp actually has the properties attributed to it in order to be *thinking of* Aladdin's lamp, especially when we are about to assert that this very lamp never existed.

Following Moore's lead, Gareth Evans gave an account which is sensitive to the fact that negative existentials are moves within a pretence exposing the fact that it is a pretence. But – as I hope to show in greater detail in the Chapter 7 when I examine Evans's theory – his own analysis does not remain quite faithful to this constraint. According to his analysis, "really (Cerberus exists)" is a false sentence

(hence its negation true) because "Cerberus exists" does not express any proposition at all – it at best "make-believedly" expresses some proposition. Once we lift away the complicated operator "really" and come out of the world of make-believe, "Cerberus exists"; "Vetāla exists"; "Holmes exists" – all of these mean the same, that is, for a believer in Russellian propositions like Evans – *nothing at all*. This counter-intuitive result is inevitable if we try to force the negative existential – via some complicated truth-conditions – back into game (1) conversation. The master-game is invoked just to make perspicuous this in-and-out doxastic structure, the simultaneous participatory and evaluative cognitive attitude behind negative existential judgements.

The noetic structure of the player of Game* is similar to that of a radical doubter who proceeds to resolve his doubt. He starts by granting an assumptive content – playing along, as it were, with the pretence of believing what goes on in story-telling or dream-describing. At this stage the question of belief is not wholly relevant because reference prior to predication does not have room for assertion or assent. As we have mentioned already, such radical existence doubt arises because some items of game (2) or (3) could also transpire to be game (1) realities (e.g. the historical Emperor Charlemagne in Calvino's story, *The Nonexistent Knight*). Having picked out these contentiously real items from the content of a merely dissembled belief, this doubter gets down to the business of searching for them in the actual world. When he fails to find one, he gives vent to his full belief that *it* does not exist. This belief is very much like a belief expressed fully within game (1) (e.g. that the U.S.S.R. does not exist), except that the subject of this denial is available for a discriminating reference only within the relevant game (2) (which Calvino plays with us).

The use of the singular term in the master-game only signals which item one is searching for, whereas the use of the existence predicate signals "found it" with the weight of belief. Gilson (1957, p. 39) tells us that Averroes pointed out that the Arabic word for "exists" comes from a root originally meaning "found". As a game of existence-assessment, the master-game can be called the language-game of seeking and finding.

One feels an irrepressible itch at this point to ask the question: "What is it to pick an item from the content of a feigned belief?" After all, *beliefs* can have contents. Since feigning to believe is not believing, how can that have a content too?

One way of addressing this worry is to remind ourselves that as a game-crosser even the master-game statement need not be *serious* in every aspect. It does not need to start with *really* picking out an imaginary object of feigned belief (which is impossible to do). It is enough if we honestly pretend to pick out the very same object which the original teller of the tale pretended to pick out. Of course, this *sameness* will be feigned sameness. Just as a teacher has to mimic a mistake before she can clarify which specific mistake she is correcting, a negative existential – being a corrective move of the over-arching master-game – has to start with a referential gesture of simulated belief and end with an unguarded disbelief expressed in the existential idiom of serious-world talk.[21] It is this cognitive cocktail of suspension and commitment which game (1) by itself fails to allow for.

1.7 FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON THE GAMES

There can, however, be a language-game which, in a manner of speaking, is embedded in another. A fictional person might be talking about his dreams and visions (e.g., Hamlet referring to his father's apparition or Macbeth to the dagger) or, at a point in the fiction telling a story (e.g. Ivan in *Brothers Karamazov* making up the fiction of the Grand Inquisitor). Other examples are a story which I might hear in a dream, or a dream which I have inside a longer dream. Thus, there can be ineliminable names in a game (e.g. game (2)) which refer to objects that do not exist even within game (2) but count as objects within some kind of pretence nevertheless. The singular expressions denoting them are honest because they stand for items of a game twice removed, as it were, from game (1). Such specifiable objects as "Hamlet's father's ghost" might be available as subjects of singular negative existentials, which can be true within a particular game when we talk about stories within stories, dreams within dreams, dreams within stories and stories within dreams. But the order of embedding must be irreversible. We must know which game is played inside which and not reverse them; otherwise we have "grave" ontological problems like those which bothered poor Alice when she heard that she was a character in the Red Queen's dream after being sure all along that the Red Queen was a character in hers. In game (2) Alice exists and plays game (3) with Tweedledum, etc. as items in that embedded game (3). The wider game (2) then plays the provisional role of game (1) in relation to the narrower game (3) or (2) which it embeds. But in that game (3) Tweedledum exists and cannot be denied particularity. In Game*, the *real* master-game, of course, we can assert the unreality of Alice along with all that she dreamt up. A philosophically interesting (perhaps potentially maddening) feature of game (2) is that among the important features of game (1) which it simulates is the fact that game (1) describes an actual world where we play the master-game. So within game (2) we have a fictional master-game. While we are on the subject of cross-allusion of the games to each other, it might be best to forestall one possible confusion. The fact that the other games, including the fictional and the master-game, are really played by us is, of course, a fact of the actual world. Thus, taken as spatio-temporally individuated utterances, moves of all the other games can themselves be referred to quite plainly in game (1) or in real-world talk. Can we therefore say that game (1) is all-inclusive or is the only game we ever play? I don't think we can. And here is the reason why. Referring to certain utterances does not constitute or require referring to what those utterances refer to. If Peter tells me on a Sunday afternoon: "Woody Allen is a mystic", I can easily refer back on Monday to the *utterance* Peter made as "what you told me yesterday" – without having to talk about Woody Allen. In this manner, unlike the master-game, which enables me to speak of both Gandhi and Gregor Samsa game (1) does not allow us to speak of Gregor Samsa, but permits me to talk of Gandhi and to speak about *Kafka's-story-about-Gregor-Samsa* (such that in this hyphenated expression the name "Gregor Samsa" occurs as an undetachable Goodmanian part). Thus game (1) does not range over all that the master-game does, although in one sense it ranges over the Master Game itself as the kind of talk real people really engage in.

However, I *do* make a distinction between apparent reference and genuine or sincere reference. It is of some moment to recognise that when the cheat talks of his imaginary wealthy cousin, he himself is not even playfully referring to any item, and such a cousin does not exist to be referred to in any game. He wants his audience to assume that he is picking out a particular from game (1). But when held responsible for it, he most probably says, "I was joking." Of course he was not *joking*. We shall call his piece of discourse a "speech-act bastard", which has no definite parentage even in any parasitic game. This is designed to manifest a conscious effort on our part to resist the deplorable sort of "Meinongian" or "pan-referentialist" pressure to countenance a separate language-game for talking *de re* about all (even insincerely spoken of) nonentities.[22] Jokes, e.g. those about George Bush or Gorbachev, should *not* be understood as playing game (2) with a fictional Bush and a fictional Gorbachev. Spurious statements about real people become funny only when they are taken to be strictly about those very real individuals. They are sometimes fictions about real people and sometimes rather like excusable and entertaining lies told in game (1) by which no one is deceived.

About artificial definite descriptions like "The present King of France" we take a similar stance. Since nobody ever, in the period of its philosophical celebrity, actually felt it to be the designation of a fictional object (if anyone was misinformed enough to call the President of France that, that mistake should be taken care of by paraphrases), nor sincerely talked as if such a king was one distinct nonentity rather than another, that tendentious illustration of an empty term we happily surrender to the philosopher who invented it to box against.

Before concluding, we should add a cautionary remark that our conferring itemhood on dream objects or fictional characters should not mislead anyone to interpret our theory as a metaphysical "levels of existence" or "grades of reality" thesis. Although we distinguish between empty terms which can be eliminated and terms which lack reference in game (1) but have some designatum in some other game, our tentative definition of the predicate "exists" (in the absolute sense) should make clear that we have not assigned any thin sort of being to nonentities. A quote from Carnap warning Quineans against a parallel misinterpretation is in order here.

> The acceptance of a new kind of entity is represented in language by the introduction of a framework of new forms of expressions to be used with a new set of rules... Thus it is clear that the acceptance of a linguistic framework must not be regarded as implying a metaphysical doctrine concerning the reality of the entities in question. It seems due to a neglect of this important distinction that some contemporary nominalists label the admission of variables of abstract types as "Platonism".
>
> Carnap (1947, reprinted 1975) p. 213

My "games"solution may look too naive or innocuous to be able to handle the profound logical puzzle with which I opened this chapter. It does not resort to new realms of being or non-being, does not recommend drastic revisions of classical rules of inference, does not take sides in Russell–Meinong or Frege–Kripke debates in the relevant fields. But still it remains attractive to me because it retains all five of the initial plausible-looking assumptions and yet escapes inconsistency. In Game*, a singular existence denial comes out as straightforwardly true. The used fictional singular term itself occurs as its subject-term. Existence, defined as a first-level predicate applicable non-universally only in the 'master-game' figures as a predicate in it. The account is not meta-linguistic because in the master-game statement in question it is not merely the *name*, or its fictional *use*, or the negation-embedded existential *sentence* that is talked about. The link between the existence-predicate and existential quantification is retained *within* each ordinary, i.e. non master-game. Even where existence is taken as a truly and singularly deniable property, its link with quantification is not completely severed because "*a* exists" in the master-game is defined disjunctively as "For some x, x is an item of game (1) or x is an item of game (4) and $a = x$." Finally, the rule of existential generalisation is preserved without restriction within each individual game; that is what we usually play with our words and sentences. My repeated disavowal of ontological commitment to new "realms" of being may appear to be inconsistent with my free use of the "world" idiom (as in "the world of game (2)" or the "world of Escher's *Belvedere*" etc.). To ease that worry let me stress that to talk about a world is not to talk about a new set of things but to talk about a collection of understood sentences, held true – (perhaps fictionally) under a certain stance of speaking. As long as we pretend that these sentences are true we also *pretend* that certain single things spoken of in these sentences exist and bear properties just like real things do. But, of course, many of those "things" are nothing at all outside the pretence.

I do not quite evade important questions like: "What proposition does a fictional sentence express?" or "What does a fictional name refer to?" But a question about any sentence expressing a sense or making a singular reference is always asked *within* the conventions of some language-game or other. Of course, the exact nature of the pretence which enables us to play these non-factual language-games remains to be seen. In my discussion of fictional and phenomenal discourse I try to throw some light on this exceedingly complex linguistic phenomenon of *speaking as if*. How my games framework can handle special logical, semantic and pragmatic problems arising out of fictional discourse or discourse about the world of paintings, dreams or films also remains to be seen. These points are taken up in subsequent chapters.

One pertinent question that can be asked here is: "How does all this talk of language-games achieve anything more than could be done more simply by the use of intentional operators?" Let us try to make do with the intentional operator "It is true in fiction F that..."

Presumably the policy should be to use this operator to preface every serious use of fictional proper names whenever they are allegedly employed with a specific singular reference. Thus "Raskolnikov killed an old lady" gets paraphrased as "It is true in *Crime and Punishment* that Raskolnikov killed an old lady." But by the same token, since the same name with the same reference is used in the outside-the-fiction sentence, "Raskolnikov does not exist", we have to paraphrase it as "It is true in *Crime and Punishment* that Raskolnikov does not exist." Such a paraphrase would generate *false* sentences out of true ones, except in those rare tricky cases where the fiction itself characterises one of its *bona fide* participants as unreal (as in Calvino's story *The Nonexistent Knight*).[23]

The problem with intentional operators is that they govern entire sentences at a time, and their scope cannot be limited only to the singular term. Besides, in lifting away the force of existential commitment of fictional singular terms, they also dull the edge of specificity of reference. This is an unwanted side-effect of the device.

The only other alternative is to take the use of the name "Raskolnikov" in the negative existential as outside the fiction and therefore not governed by any fictional intentional cover. But, without the support of my kind of games' approach, such a name either lacks any reference and hence if it is a proper name then it counts as a piece of nonsense; or it is taken as a definite description, or it has to be taken as the name of an actual abstract entity – a character created by Dostoyevsky. The third alternative is not at all helpful for an account of true *denials* of existence. As a literary abstract entity – an immortal creation of Dostoyevsky — Raskolnikov is very much *existent*; hence the true negative existential once again comes out false. The second alternative, of treating only "names" of *nonexistents* as definite descriptions, leads to the unacceptable view that the logical structure of a sentence depends upon its truth value: "Russell existed" is singular because it is true, but "Raskolnikov existed" is existentially quantified and general – because it is false. This is intolerable because what proposition is expressed by a sentence must be determined independently of whether the sentence is true or false. Since determining the truth value of a sentence awaits a definite fixing of its logical form, the fixing of its logical form cannot ever depend upon determining its truth value. As to the first alternative – that a name would be senseless if it is without a reference — a Fregean protest would get us no further. We not only need a thought to be expressed by "Raskolnikov does not exist", we want it to have the truth value *true*, which is impossible even in Frege's system without assigning some reference to the name "Raskolnikov". Such a reference can be made available in Game* which also allows us – unlike the intentional operator – to keep the existence-predicate restricted to an out and out full-blooded use. Thus I hope the games-structure can achieve what intentional operators fail to do.

Surely my solution to the age-old puzzle of how to specify or name that which is said not to be there at all will bring new problems and puzzles with it. All philosophical solutions do. I can anticipate a few major ones at the very outset.

First, am I not taking sides in dangerous metaphysical debates by defining the out-and-out (game*) sense of the existence-predicate in terms either of availability in the spatio-temporal world of game (1) or of being a genuine abstract object of game (4)? A fully fledged Berkeleyan, or an antirealist about physical objects and abstract entities, will reject the primacy of *both* of these games! To be honest, I never thought I was building up an ontology when I tried to delineate by the "language-games" metaphor the different styles of talk in which ordinary people engage. But then nearly every revisionary metaphysician claims to be descriptive! All I can confess is that if ever anyone asks an existence question about an item that one has successfully singled out for conversational purposes, then, I think, some kind of trans-game talking of the sort described above has to be done in order to answer the question plainly. Maybe this much ontological involvement *is* necessary

for articulating how singular existence-denials are possible in day-to-day discourse. I have not intended my explanation to cover *philosophically* loaded negative existentials like "the self does not exist" or "God does not exist", although some illumination in that direction can be expected even from this picture of ordinary light-hearted judgements of unreality.

The last example brings me to my second big worry. There is a certain anxiety concerning what I call "tough cases". Where shall I place our talk about God? A nonbeliever may place it straightaway in game (2). But even a believer's talk about, say, the God of the Judeo–Christian tradition hardly fits game (1). Is God an abstract object like a number? As a necessary Being he cannot afford to be a spatio-temporal physical object; yet as compassionate, creative and responsive to other sentient creatures he needs to be concrete.[24] Maybe we need a whole different language-game to make sense of religious talk about God, unless we are such radical atheists that we would gladly consign such talk to utter senselessness. I really cannot tell. There are other tough cases, e.g. our own talk about the Universe or about Time. I can set them aside as more recondite philosophical topics of discourse, but reference to "the whole world" is not uncommon in common speech. I think, *the whole world* of common parlance is nothing but what I call the game (1) plus game (4) world itself. So, in a sense, our talk about it obliquely alludes to those language-games themselves. Hence, when one is using such expressions one is playing, in a sense, a language-game about language-games. (Let us not confuse that with the master-game.)

Third, what are my criteria for counting a certain style of discourse as a separate language-game? Why have I distinguished between speaking of abstract entities and speaking of spatio-temporal particulars, even though both are serious belief-expression games, but have lumped together dream talk and picture talk? I address some of these questions in the very last section of the last chapter. But I do not mind if language-games are considered upon a somewhat different principle, as long as my basic intuition that singular existence-negation requires playing the master-game remains unchallenged. Indeed, I do not believe that just my games (1), (2), (3) and (4) are sufficient to capture *all* our different ways of speaking about items. When we speak about objects of ancient or primitive belief, including individuals thought to be real by mistaken scientific theories, then our own discourse deserves to be categorised as a language-game distinct from both the fictional and the phenomenal language-games, maybe a game (5)[25] which pretends to take items falsely believed in as individuals — provided the false beliefs are parts of a largely shared tradition. "Vulcan does not exist" or "the river Styx does not exist" may be looked upon as Game* statements involving game (5) objects.

Can the master-game be played in the reverse order? From inside the world of a fiction, would all the native entities of game (1) look like fictional objects? I don't think so. I do not want my story of games to sound too much like a philosophical device of possible worlds. A specific fiction can *mention* certain existent items as being nonexistent in its plot (e.g. a novel can begin, "Suppose Indira Gandhi was childless." In such a story Rajiv Gandhi will not exist, but even in this case the rest

of the history of our actual world will be mostly taken as fact except the bits of it involving Rajiv Gandhi). So the direction of my master-game remains irreversible.

Finally, why call speaking about the actual world a "game" at all? What can be less playful and more serious than talking about spatio-temporally real objects? My notion of a language-game spelt out in the introduction with allusion to Wittgenstein should provide a simple answer to this question. Some philosophers like Hintikka have married Wittgenstein's idea with the mathematical theory of games and come up with a game-theoretic semantics for first-order predicate-logic. I have no such mighty structure in mind. But in so far as assertions made about the actual world express knowledge claims, and knowledge claims get challenged all the time by sceptical counter-moves, any earnest asserter can be faithfully represented as a player of a world-exploring game trying to defend himself against justification-defeating attacks. From very ancient times the most serious conversations about metaphysical and cosmogonic matters have been conducted in the form of riddle-solving contests.[26] There still is a very strong element of a truth-aiming tournament in our committed conversation about the world which justifies my calling it "*game* (1)". And the master-game is, of course, play *par excellence* because it includes both make-believe and serious talk.

NOTES

[1] There is an interesting debate in *Nyāya Vaiśesika* philosophy as to whether they are mere lack of light or positive entities. Those who think that they are positive coloured objects appeal to our experience of shadows as moving, remaining static, growing bigger and smaller, trailing behind bodies, being countable and having contours. Even the school which reduces them to mere absences of light, regards them as objective, none the less. See also G.E. Moore "Shadows, Patches of Light, Etc." in *Commonplace Book*, p. 142. For vague objects, see Terence Parsons, "Entities Without Identity" in Tomberlin, (1987).

[2] See Gale (1966) pp. 99–101 and Geach (1955) p. 267.

[3] If, in a dream, I seem to sit with a friend who has passed away and then mentally exclaim, when half-awake, "But he does not *exist*!", the statement will be a negative existential only in form; it will actually be a statement of absence which can only be about *real* absentees. See Appendix for further distinctions between absence and unreality. This would be the *Nyāya* position.

[4] Prior talks about this at length in Sec. 12, Ch. VIII of his *Past, Present and Future*. To quote a typically Prioresque parenthesis, "*The dead are metaphysically less frightening than the unborn*."

[5] Quoted in Williams (1981) p. 118.

[6] Superficially like counter-factuals, which, as it were, take some uniformities and essential features of the actual world for granted and diverge from it only at a certain point or at a certain level of contingent characteristics.

[7] *Collected Shorter Poems (1927–57)* Faber, (1966), p. 320.

[8] The author's stance inside game (2) is usually that of an all-knowing reporter. But, sometimes, to make the pretence of "recording facts" more vivid – the author too can fear a mistake or confess ignorance.

[9] There *is* a traditional philosophical usage of the term "imagination" which covers erroneous experience. See Strawson (1974) pp. 45–64, where the following quote from Kant occurs: "It does not follow that every intuitive representation of outer things involves the existence of these things, for their representation can very well be the product *merely of the imagination* (as in dreams and delusions)."

[10] The "of" in "dream-of" is, again, misleading here; I think it is perfectly normal to say, "I saw an ancient manor house in a dream last night, but that house does not exist." See Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 184 on dream-describing as a language-game.

[11] Usually, it is only for a short while after we wake up that we talk referringly about dream items and then, of course, we can use names for them if names are heard or otherwise psychologically associated with those items inside the dream.

[12] What, in a recently popularised jargon, are called "QUALE" have sometimes been called "phenomenal objects". But qualia, as far as I can now tell, are not game (3) items. They belong, if anywhere, in game (1). Since I have anti-materialistic sympathies, I would like to believe that qualia are real and hence not native items of game (3). No native of game (3) really exists.

[13] See Bob Hale, *Abstract Objects* (Blackwall, 1987) for the hierarchy of abstract objects.

[14] Ordinary usage does not seem to be absolutely clear about such questions. Hence the flexibility in our conceptual scheme.

[15] See Sharpe (1979). Perhaps the interpretations are not quite particular entities themselves; they can be looked upon as *modes* in which performances can exemplify musical works. So we have musical works, under a certain interpretation, where both the work and the interpretation are repeatable but not the performance.

[16] And, one tends to think tensed denials of fictional characters are also possible if we use sentences within game (2) such as, "Sherlock Holmes did not exist in the 16th century", etc. It would not be possible to talk about dead fictional items unless someone dies in the story (e.g. Hamlet's father) and is still talked about. If the story ends when the hero is *about to die*, we still cannot say that he died afterwards. In game (2) he remains timelessly moribund, unless we pretend that we do not have adequate information about when he finally died.

[17] See Routley (1966) pp. 52–53 for the notion of suitable designata and interpretation of "(Σx)" in its terms. Also see Redmon (1973) p. 59 for reference to language-games.

[18] One may want to tighten the definition by adding "which satisfies the predicate '... exists at t' for some t" (only applicable to game (1)).

[19] These exotic references will be given more substance in the Appendix to this book.

[20] See "Real" and "Imaginary" in his *Lectures in Philosophy* (1966).

[21] It is this phenomenon which Walton calls "unmasking a pretence from within". See p. 423 of *Mimesis As Make-Believe* (1990).

[22] "Suppose I walk out of a restaurant, saying to the waiter, 'Sam Jones will pay the bill'; Sam Jones does not exist; but has one casual remark created a fictional character? This seems extravagant." Kripke (1973 b, Shearman Lecture 3). Also: "'Supervisor Josef decided your case. The matter is closed. I can do nothing.'; So I was told by a government clerk wishing to be rid of me. I later discovered that there was no Supervisor Josef. Did the clerk refer to a Supervisor Josef? No: he pretended to" (Ziff, 1984, p. 31). Note that this sort of deceitful pretending does not count as a move in game (2). The clerk was not engaging in a make-believe situation that he wished us to take part in.

[23] See p. 285 of *Our Ancestors* by Italo Calvino (1980).

[24] "God himself," says Thomas Aquinas, "is neither universal nor particular." (*Summa Theologica*, question 13, article 9).

[25] When in his *Psychology* (Vol. II, pp. 291–311) James speaks with insight about "the many worlds" to which "every object we think of gets referred", he mentions the worlds of "illusions and prejudices of the race". He goes a little too far when he allows the world of sheer madness, although some story worlds come pretty close to craziness in conceptual indiscipline.

[26] See Huizinga's eye-opening discussion of this point in Chapters VI and II of *Homo Ludens*, (1955). For many Tibetan Buddhist monks, deciding deep ontological issues about the nature of the self, time, causality, etc. is a very vigorous game practised with the full theatrical flare of the sport of debate – to this day.

CHAPTER 2
THE LOGICAL FORM OF EXISTENCE-ASSERTIONS

Question: Does the proposition "Man Exists" have a predicate or not?
Answer: This is a problem on which both the ancients and the moderns disagree: some say that this sentence has no predicate, and some say that it has a predicate. To my mind, both these judgements are in a way correct, each in its own way.

al-Fārābī (*c.* 873–950 A.D.)[1]

2.01 VARIETIES OF CONTEXTS FOR THE USE OF THE VERB "TO EXIST"

The enigma of singular existence-denials does not even begin to bother us until we treat assertions of existence as simple subject–predicate statements. (See claim 2 of my initial layout of the puzzle in the Introduction). The most popular way of dissolving the problem, therefore, is to appeal to the worn-out slogan: "Existence is not a predicate." In this chapter I shall try to expose several ambiguities in this slogan, and then rebut the standard arguments given for the underlying view that "... exists" is not a first-level predicate of objects. It is becoming increasingly clear to logicians these days that there are no insuperable logical obstacles to treating "... exists" as a first-level predicate.[2] How its attachment to a singular term results in a well-formed sentence encoding information that could possibly turn out to be false is, of course, a deep mystery which I shall try to unravel briefly at the end of this chapter and then gradually in greater detail through the rest of the book.

It is because "exists" functions grammatically as much like a predicate as "walks" that the thesis that it is *not* a predicate becomes philosophically interesting. However, the thesis turns out to be doubly ambiguous. First, because in ordinary language the verb "to exist" is used in quite a few logically distinguishable ways. Second, because the technical term "predicate" has different meanings. Due to the second sort of ambiguity, those who have denied that "... exists" functions as a first-level predicate of objects have gone on, sometimes, to affirm that it *is* a second-level predicate, or a predicate of some kinds of things other than objects, or a predicate of linguistic expressions etc. I shall deal with these positive views about existence as a peculiar predicate in the second part of this chapter. But, first, let us look at the different types of sentences in which, grammatically, "exists" seems to function as a predicate or part of a predicate.

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 33–62.

Consider the following sentences:

(a) Polytheistic Christians do not *exist*.
(b) The perfect number smaller than 6 does not *exist*.
(c) Russell would not have *existed* if his parents had never met.
(d) That pool of water glistening in the sun on the road over there does not really *exist*.
(e) James Bond does not *exist*.
(f) Most of the two-thousand-year-old Chinese terracotta soldiers still *exist*.
(g) The first city to be built in the twenty-first century does not yet *exist*.

Clearly, (a) and (f) are general propositions whereas (c), (d), (e) have the look of singular propositions. "Exist" as a predicate is quite avoidable in (a) since all it says is that Christians are not polytheistic. One can easily explain away the singularness of (b) by subjecting "The perfect number smaller than 6" to a Russellian analysis in terms of general or quantified claims introduced by "there is at least one" and "for all" etc. Even the subject-term of (g) – especially because it tries to pick out a future entity – can be surrendered to such a general translation. But it would take a pretty strongly revisionary theory of language to reduce (c) or (e) to non-singular statements. As we shall see below, the *predicatehood* of "... exists" or the *propertyhood* of existence is easier to disprove with general sentences than with singular ones. In my attack against the negative thesis (that "... exists" is not a predicate), I shall avoid using examples like (f) and (g) or "The U.S.S.R. no longer exists", although such tensed denials of existence have been pervasively used in the literature for quick rebuttals of the negative thesis.

As I have already indicated in the first chapter, a distinction should be drawn between existing *simpliciter*, and existing *now*. Since (f) and (g) are affirmative and negative predications of the latter kind of existence, I shall deal with them in a separate chapter (Chapter 3). At this point I am only interested in showing that the standard arguments for the view that "... exists" — in its timeless use – is not a first-level predicate do nôt work. There are mainly four such lines of reasoning: from Kant, David Pears, G.E. Moore and Frege–Russell–Quine respectively.

2.11 *Hume, Kant and the Non-Additiveness Argument*

When Kant, in his classic refutation of the Ontological Argument, asserts that existence (or "being") is not a *determining* or *real* predicate but merely a logical one, he makes it clear that a real predicate would be "a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing". Kant's insight that existence is never additive in this rather vague sense can be traced back to Hume – his avowed philosophical "awakener". Hume observed emphatically that the appearance of uniting two distinct ideas given by existential judgements like "God exists" is deceptive because we do not have any idea of existence apart from the idea of the objects which are said to exist.[3] It is interesting to note that a similar appeal to intuition led another British Empiricist – John Stuart Mill — to just the opposite conclusion:

> let me say, "The sun exists" ... Here we find two distinct objects of conception: the sun is one object, existence is another. Let it not be said that this second conception, existence, is involved in the first: for the sun may be conceived of as no longer existing. "The sun" does not convey all the meaning that is conveyed by "The sun exists" ... a "round square" does not include the meaning of "a round square exists" for it does not and cannot exist. (Mill, *System of Logic*, Bk 1, Ch. 1.2.)

So, a phenomenological excavation of commonsense yields no unanimous answer to the question "Does the addition of the predicate 'exists' make any difference to the subject-term?" because, clearly, the question itself admits of more than one interpretation. More recent interpretations of Kant have tried to flesh out the idea of "adding to the concept" in terms of a concept's enhanced capacity to rule out instantiators. Surely, if deserving a place in a job description were the hallmark of a determining predicate, it would be obvious that "exists" is not a determining predicate. No job advertisement, for a librarian, say, mentions "and she must exist" as an additional qualification after "she must hold a Master's degree in Library Science, know word-processing and French, etc". Since it is not usually expected that Santa Claus or Cinderella would apply for such jobs, such an "additional" requirement of reality would not serve to exclude any candidate.

Yet, it is easy to imagine other contexts where existing can merit being mentioned as much as any other property. In a guessing game one can be helped to narrow down the range of possible objects by specifying that it exists. Conversely, some uncontroversial predicates like "... is a living creature" can be equally idle and non-additive in a job description.

Thus, pragmatic conversational considerations serve no better than phenomenological considerations to bolster the murky tenet that the concept of existence makes no addition to the concept of any (disputed) object.

One can, however, extract the following argument from Kant's text in the Transcendental Dialectic (*C.P.R.* B 621–630) which goes beyond Hume's counting of "ideas":

K(1): If "E!" were a determining predicate like "F" and "G" then we could never find an object exactly matching the concept of something which is completely described by the predicates "F" and "G" because the object found would be something distinct which satisfies "F", "G" and "E!".
K(2): But we can find objects exactly matching our concepts.

Ergo, "E!" is not a determining predicate.

Though this argument is valid, its first premise runs into profound problems. Suppose I am looking for yellow, sour, juicy fruits. Kant seems to be worried that if we treat existence as a differentiating property then lemons would not satisfy this specification because they would be yellow, sour, juicy *and existent* fruits – hence more than what we wanted.[4] But should anyone looking for such yellow fruits feel frustrated if what was found had all the required qualities plus, say, the quality of being egg-shaped, unless one claimed the specification to be so complete that any extra quality in a specimen would disqualify it? Now, it is extremely doubtful if any

concept can be constituted by such exhaustive description. (Perhaps, what Hume meant by the "faintness" of an idea in comparison with the vividness of an impression was precisely its *in*completeness or *openendedness*.) A concept becomes a concept by virtue of multiple satisfaction and, if the law of discernibility of non-identicals holds, each of *two* samples of the same general concept must have some other properties they do not share but which fall outside the list of descriptions entailed by that general concept. Kant's premise K(1) rests on this suspect notion of "complete determination".

Even if we let this notion of complete specification pass, the above argument succeeds only if we prohibit the inclusion of "existent" into the so-called "complete determination" of the object of our thought. Otherwise we could just make the designation $(\imath x)(\phi x \ \& \ \psi x \ \& \ E\,!\,x)$ and find that it is answered to by the unique object which ϕs, ψs and exists! Those who would like to take "existent" as a real predicate would, obviously, ignore the prohibition. The prohibition upon which the argument stands itself rests on the conclusion of the argument, namely, existence cannot be included in the specification of an object. So the argument begs the question.

A closer look at these much discussed passages reveals that Kant was suffering from a tension between two views, both of which he was eager to embrace. The first is what we can call "The Hundred-Dollar Point": *Thinking of an object and thinking of it as existent are one and the same.* The second is "The Syntheticity Point": *Whatever our concept of an object may contain, we must go outside it if we are to ascribe existence to the object.* No proposition asserting the existence of an object can be analytically necessary (*C.P.R.* B 629).

It was the second or Syntheticity Point which was the basis for Kant's refutation of the Ontological Argument, whereas it was the first or Hundred-Dollar Point which formed the basis of the slogan: "Existence is not a predicate."

Since Kant's definition of synthetic judgements is explicitly in terms of subject–predicate relationship, Kant is compelled to treat existence assertions as subject–predicate judgements if he treats them as synthetic. Furthermore, proving that existence is a predicate is neither necessary nor sufficient for the success of the Ontological Argument. Norman Malcom has presented a version of the argument which does *not* assume the predicatehood of existence yet claims to establish that the unsurpassably great Being, if it is possible at all, must necessarily be there. And of course, existence being a property is not enough to ensure that the most perfect being must possess it by definition. So it is not at all clear why Kant needs to establish that existence is not a predicate in order to refute the Ontological Argument.

Kant's fondness for the Hundred-Dollar example not only made him forget that our concept of a hundred real dollars does contain a full hundred dollars more than our concept of one hundred imaginary dollars (otherwise our idea of having a hundred dollars and our idea of having no money at all would be the same!) but also led him to some incredibly bad arguments about actuality and possibility.

Earlier on in the First Critique,[5] Kant draws the standard distinction between a merely thinkable (possible) entity and an actually given (existent) entity. In this connection he anticipates the nub of his attack against the Ontological Argument by asserting, "In the *mere concept* of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found" (B 273).

But after this he foreshadows the notorious Hundred-Dollar point by trying to argue that the concept of an actual (existent) object is *no richer* than the concept of a possible object. The oddity of the ensuing claim that the realm of possibility is no wider than that of actuality can be lived with, once we take note of Kant's peculiar ideas about *real* as against *logical* possibility. But one specific argument that he employs for this claim baffles all attempts at a sympathetic reading. To quote the entire passage:

> It does indeed seem as if we were justified in extending the number of possible things beyond that of the actual, on the ground that something must be added to the possible to constitute the actual. But this [alleged] process of adding to the possible I refuse to allow. For that which would have to be added to the possible, over and above the possible, would be impossible.[6]

Now, it is hard to believe that Kant would be confusing "adding to the content of a concept" with "adding to the extension of a concept". Yet, that is precisely what he does. Surely Kant was aware of the inverse variation between denotation and connotation. Cows outnumber black cows because the concept of a cow has less content than the concept of a black cow. Thus anyone who claims that the concept of *an actually existing* ϕ is richer than the concept of *a* ϕ is obviously not claiming a larger applicability range for the richer concept. Yet Kant's charge against such an augmentation of the content of the concept is that what would have to be added "over and above the possible, would be impossible". This charge assumes that the concept was being added to by adding things other than those which were possible to its extension!

Apart from the question-begging argument based on complete determination criticised above, this blatantly wrong-headed gambit is Kant's only explicit argument against the view that ascription of actual existence does add something new to the concept of the subject of a judgement. The Kantian support for the thesis that existence is not a determining predicate is, to put it mildly, rather weak.

Kant seems to insist at the same time that existence ascription both does and does not add something to the idea of the subject whose existence is in question. Recent interpreters have been tempted to resolve this tension in Kant by following a Fregean line of clarification. Existence is *not* added to the object as its other determinations are added but *is added* as a determination to the concept of an object.[7] Now Kant's idea that existence is not so much a distinguishing property of the thing itself, as it is of the *thought* or *notion* one has of it, has been often confused with Frege's idea that existence is a property of a concept. But, as will become clearer later, Frege's *concepts* are not at all what Kant meant by our *conception*, or thought, or idea of an object.[8]

Looking back into the *Critique*, at the table of Categories we come across the pair "Existence–Nonexistence" (B 106) as the pure concepts which we can elicit from the *assertoric* forms of categorical judgements. Existence, to be sure, is not an empirical predicate for which items can be checked, not because it is not a predicate of any sort at all but because it is a pure, i.e. modal, predicate. Although it is pure, it can never be found to be contained in any conception of an object but has to be attached to a concept from outside, on the basis of the *a posteriori* realisability of the concept.[9]

The distilled essence of Kant's view about existence proofs seems to be this: by showing that the sentence "The f which exists exists" is analytic, we cannot secure for the concept of the *f which exists* an actual exemplifier. A concept is guaranteed an actual exemplifier (i.e. united with an object categorically posited in relation to experience as a whole) only through a demonstration that it is preceded by a perception of its objects. "The perception which supplies the content to the concept is the sole mark of actuality" (*C.P.R.*, B 273). This principle yields the corollary that the actual existence of an absolutely imperceptible putative entity must, therefore, remain undemonstrable.

This idea of a predicate which is always to remain outside the "inner determinations" of an object, and yet can be ascribed to it informatively, is closer to Meinong's idea of an extra-nuclear predicate (Parsons, 1980, pp. 22–26) than to the Fregean notion of a second-level predicate. So, all that Kant succeeds in proving is that existence *is* a predicate, albeit of a rather special sort.

2.12 *The Argument from Referential Tautology and Referential Contradiction*

David Pears[10] has articulated a second major argument which goes somewhat like this:

P_1. If "exists" is regarded as a predicate then all singular affirmative existentials would be tautologous (hence necessarily true) and singular negative existentials would be contradictory (hence necessarily false).

P_2. But, affirmative existentials are often false, and the true ones are contingently so, whereas negative existentials are often true.

Ergo: "Exists" cannot be regarded as a predicate.

Premise P_2 can be easily corroborated by examples like "Sherlock Holmes exists" which are false and "Baker Street exists" which are contingently true and can even be informative to a reader of the stories who had taken the location to be imaginary. But the problem with this argument lies with the first premise.

P_1 works only if we assume or imply the actual existence of the bearer of a name by every use of a name. Thus any logic which is *free* from existence assumption about its singular terms would reject this premise. Even if we do retain that classical assumption of existential import, we need not regard "Pegasus does not exist" as a referential contradiction because, as I indicated in the first chapter, the reference to Pegasus – along with its existential import – can be accommodated on the relevant fictional plane of conversation, whereas the existence denial could be understood on a different plane. Once these planes are distinguished, the naming and denying of existence need not clash, even under an "unfree" logic for each of the planes of conversation.

Finally, Mackie (1976) provided an excellent argument to counteract the suggestion that singular affirmative existentials would be trivial if existence is regarded as a (referentially presumed) universal predicate. The subordinate noun clause in the sentence "President Ford does not know that David Pears exists" attaches the existence predicate to the name of a real person. Yet what the President is said to be ignorant about is not the *trivium* that David Pears is David Pears; nor can we say that the President is said to be unable to guess that the name "David Pears" stands for a real person. Even if he knew that the name refers to someone or other he would not have known *about* David Pears that *he* exists. Hence the affirmative existential, in spite of using a name and bringing in no fictional discourse, reveals its informative non-vacuousness when it occurs inside an intensional context like "*A* did not know that ...", "*A* was pleased to find out that ...", etc.

2.13 *Infelicity of "All" and "Most" Quantified General Existentials*

Another argument formulated by G.E. Moore, who was himself sceptical about its conclusion, ran as follows:

M_1 Every genuine predicate can be used to form universal affirmatives and particular negatives, e.g. "All/most dogs bark" and "Some dogs do not bark".

M_2 "Exists" cannot be so used because it does not make sense to say "All/most dogs exist" or "Some dogs do not exist".

Ergo: "Exists" is not a genuine predicate.

Now suppose we grant the first premise (M_1). What lends plausibility to the second premise (M_2) is that "Some dogs do not exist" sounds odd, but why? (When the apparent subject-term is a complex one, as in "Some mad dogs exist", our natural tendency is to eliminate the existence-predicate in favour of a break-up such as "Some dogs are mad"). Hence the early Frege view that existence is nothing but the "apotheosis of the copula". But what can we do when the subject-term appears to be simple as in "dog"? In his early 1884 dialogue with Pünjer the theologian (Frege, 1979, pp. 60–5), Frege gives an interesting diagnosis of how, like the phoney subject "It" in "It is raining", "language – feeling at a loss for a grammatical *predicate*, has invented 'exist'" (ibid, p. 62). The policy we adopt is to find the proximate superordinate concept when none is supplied by the subject-concept. Thus: "There are oranges" or "There are Indians" become "Some fruits are oranges" and "Some men are Indians". So, "There are dogs" *could* become "Some animals are dogs". If we do not wish to look into the meaning of the subject-term, a blanket concept, which is the superordinate for all concepts, can be used mechanically. Nothing is better suited for *this* purpose than the catchall concept of *existent things*. Thus any sentence of the form "There are F's" becomes "Some existent things are F's", which by equivalent conversion becomes "Some F's exist".

But all of this presupposes that "some" is equivalent to "there are", which in turn is the same as "there exist". No wonder, then, that "Some dogs do not exist" would sound odd because it translates into the inconsistent sentence, "There exist dogs which do not exist".

There are two fairly easy ways of getting out of this problem and hence rejecting premise M_2. Of course, if we mean *surviving* by "existing, "i.e. if we allow the tense-

sensitive use, then "Most of Leonardo's etchings exist" makes perfect sense. But even if we do not exploit that ambiguity (which I would prefer not to rely upon), we can straightforwardly say "Some of those cities do not exist" if we are talking about cities mentioned in a certain classical dictionary which lists historical as well as mythical or legendary cities. Once again, we notice that a jump from fiction to fact helps us make sense of existence denial even in the face of an existentially committed use of "some". Thus the latter sentence could be paraphrased as "There exist cities in mythologies and ancient folklore which do not actually exist" without any inconsistency or infelicity. Since "Most dogs exist" and "Some dogs do not exist" can make decent sense in special conversational situations, the above argument from the irreparable incompleteness of the square of opposition for existence predicating general statements does not work against the predicatehood of "... exists".

2.14 *The Frege-Russell View and Quine's Argument from the Canonical Notation*

The final and strongest argument in support of the slogan that existence is not a predicate owes its origin to three of the greatest logicians of the last hundred years. The argument comes in various forms proving, positively, that existence is a second-level predicate standing for a concept under which other concepts rather than objects fall (this would be how Frege would put it), or that existence is a property of propositional functions (this would be Russell's formulation), or that existence is simply what the existential quantifier stands for – and since quantifiers are not first-level predicates, "exists" is not one either (this would be Quine's way of stating the conclusion). Fortified by these logical Titans, the doctrine is very hard to unsettle. Yet, I shall try to topple it in this section. But first let me state the general drift of the argument in my own words.[12]

F_1 The following two arguments are both fallacious and suffer from the same logical defect:

A. U.C.L.A. philosophers are numerous.
David Kaplan is a U.C.L.A. philosopher.
____
Therefore, David Kaplan is numerous.

and:

B. Donkeys exist.
Eyore is a donkey.
____
Therefore Eyore exists.

F_2 Had "numerous" been replaced by "humorous" in *A*, *A* would have been perfectly valid, because "humorous" is a first-level predicate, whereas "numerous" is not.

Ergo: B is also fallacious because "exists" is not a first-level predicate; it could become valid if "exists" was replaced by a *bona fide* first-level predicate like "has long ears".

Now, F_2 is quite invincible. It was one of Frege's greatest discoveries that numerical predicates such as "... are twelve in number" do not attach to the individuals but characterise concepts. Each of the twelve wise apostles is wise but none of them is twelve in number. That numbers are not assigned to objects, or even to collections of objects, becomes most evident when we assign the number zero. What do we assign it to? To quote Frege:

> If I say "Venus has zero moons" there simply does not exist any moon or agglomeration of moons for anything to be asserted of; but what happens is that a property is assigned to the concept "moons of venus", namely that of including nothing under it. (Foundations, 1953, p. 59)

From this, Frege reaches the momentous conclusion that: "Affirmation of existence is in fact nothing but denial of the number nought." Since numbers are affirmed (or denied) of concepts, existence is also denied (or affirmed) of concepts.

Now, this second-level analysis is extremely plausible in the case of number-predicates and even about the allied adjective "numerous" which cannot significantly be predicated to any single individual. Hence the absurdity of the conclusion, "David Kaplan is numerous." But I am never convinced by Frege's insistence, dramatised by Russell, that "David Kaplan exists" is as senseless or logically ill-begotten as "David Kaplan is 12 in number." I think the above argument does not work because F_1 is not correct in assuming that the fallacy in *B* is parallel to the fallacy in *A*. For one thing, "David Kaplan is numerous" is nonsensical but "Eyore exists" is simply *false*. The mistake in *A* was clearly a shift from speaking about the concept or property of being a U.C.L.A. philosopher to speaking about an individual exemplifier of that property. As a result, the conclusion was a logical howler of the same sort as "David Kaplan has a unique value for each argument". But the mistake in B was a switch of language-games or universes of discourse rather than a switch of logical levels. "Donkeys exist" was taken as a part of nonfictional serious talk, in game (1), where "Eyore is a donkey" will be as false as the conclusion. The only context in which "Eyore is a donkey" is true, namely in the relevant world of *Winnie the Pooh*, would also render the conclusion true. So the alleged parallelism upon which this argument is based is eminently questionable. However, concerning *general* existentials, the Frege–Russell picture of speaking about concepts has a profound plausibility. If "Satellites of Mars exist" were to be taken as a first-level predication in the same vein as "Men are mortal", then the most natural way to read the former would be to read it as saying that all satellites of Mars had this property of existence. But that would only amount to saying that if anything is a satellite of Mars, then it will have that property which is compatible with Mars having no satellite at all; whereas the original statement is patently incompatible with the latter possibility. So we are well advised to construe general existentials as first-level predications.

Yet, we are not compelled to take *singular* existentials as second-level predications about individual concepts or some such uniquely instantiable propositional functions. Quine's way of generalising the Frege–Russell account of general existentials to even singular ones was to express the perfectly well-formed sentence "Socrates exists" in the canonical notation as "$(\exists x)$ (x = Socrates)", where "... = Socrates" or "... Socratises" itself is the first-level predicate about which the

2.15 *How Kant did not Anticipate Frege*

A deeper worry which might have prevented Frege or Russell from recognising a predicate which could not be truly denied of anything real could be this: to regard existence as a genuine property is to give it the status of a universal or an abstract entity of some sort. Now, if we stick to the ontologically frugal resolve to equate, with respect to their meaning, "being there", "being real" and "existing" etc., then existence will have to *be there* in the same way as humanity, and humidity, and hence exist. But to say that existence exists sounds perilously regressive. Frege solved the problem by distinguishing between existence in the widest sense — which, loosely speaking, belongs to all objects, abstract or concrete, extensional or intensional — and actuality, (Wirklichkeit)[17] which is a genuine first-level property of only some objects, namely those which are causally interactive. And, of course, as a first-level concept or property, actuality itself is not actual – hence no regress can start there.

The problem can be solved, I think, by a stricter and clearer notion of universals such that not just any property or feature for which we can correctly collect a set of particulars counts as a real universal (which both collects and demarcates a set of particulars while itself not containing the same universal). Existence – in the widest sense – would still be a property, though not a *universal* in the strict sense because universals also exist. When Frege ruled that "no genuine predicate could apply univocally to both objects and to concepts",[18] he was operating with this stricter notion of a universal as something in which a "genuine predicate" should somehow be rooted. Only a non-universal predicate can stand for such a real universal, but a universal predicate can still be true of every single real entity that we can speak of. Once we remind ourselves of Frege's distinction between actuality and existence, the customary claim that Kant anticipated Frege's insight about existence being a second-level property of concepts loses all its plausibility.

For one thing, Kant does not make any distinction between actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) and being or existence (*Sein, Dasein, Existenz*). Corresponding to the modal distinction between possibility and actuality, Kant's fourth triad in the table of categories clearly lists "possibility/impossibility" and "*existence/nonexistence*" (*C.P.R.B* 106). From the passages of the *Postulates of Empirical Thought* to which I have alluded above (in section 2.1.1) it becomes clear that Kant defines such actual existence as the capacity to cause perception. And Frege would regard such causally efficacious actuality as a real predicate. Thus, when Kant said "existence is not a determining predicate", he was using "existence" to mean what Frege, armed with more sophisticated distinctions, would regard as a first-level property of objects. Second, Kant's main contention was that any singular existence-predication like "Socrates exists" would always be (if true, contingently true and synthetic. Strictly speaking, this thesis is incompatible with Frege's view that such a sentence will be logically ill-formed.

Third, Frege says in so many words that existence can be a component characteristic of a (higher-order) concept and that "it would therefore be going too far to assert that we can never infer from the component characteristics of a concept ...to existence". Hence, Frege has no problems with a necessarily true or even analytic

existence affirmation. Most probably the sentence "There exists one and only one cube-root of 27" will be taken by Frege as analytic because it is a theorem of arithmetic. Yet Kant would never allow any existence assertion to be analytically necessary for reasons discussed above. With regard to statements of arithmetic in particular he would have his famous reasons for claiming syntheticity (though he would regard them as necessary).

Fourth, Kant does not regard singular predicative statements like "God is omnipotent" as automatically presupposing or implying the existence of whatever the subject-term stands for. Like some latter-day free logicians, Kant could permit these statements to be *true* even if God does not exist. Frege, on the other hand, explicitly formulates the principle of existence presupposition of singular terms used in transparent contexts. If "God" does not have an existent referent then, "God is omnipotent" has no truth value according to Frege.

In spite of such glaring divergences it was easy to confuse the Kantian view of existence with the Fregean view because both views are expressed loosely by the dictum "existence is a property not of objects but of *concepts*". In this instance, when Kant uses the word "concept"[19] he is referring to the thought or notion (*Vorstellung*) one has of a thing; whereas Frege uses it to signify an objective function or property (which is part of the realm of reference, more specifically, the reference of a first-level predicate). For Kant, a statement like "Sea lions exist but unicorns do not" is a comment about the origin of our ideas of such animals; while for Frege, it is a comment about the exemplication of the properties of being a sea lion and being a unicorn. That both philosophers found fault with the Ontological argument also does not legitimise the claim that one anticipated the other's main point. Kant's complaint was that no existence-assertion can be analytic, and Frege's *distinct* complaint was that no existence-assertion can be singular. The Ontological Argument tries to make an analytic singular proposition out of "God exists". Hence it is rejected by both of them but for quite separate reasons. Failing to realise this, Jonathan Bennett has not only construed Kant's account of existence statements as "an important precursor" of Frege's view but attached the title "The Kant–Frege View" to the section of his book[20] which discusses the issue. If I have understood Kant and Frege correctly on this point, "The Kant–Frege View" is an empty term. When, as Hintikka strongly recommends, we "lay to rest the myth that existence is not a predicate"[21], we should also bury the myth that Kant was foreseeing the existential quantifier of modern logic when he was speaking about the object being added, synthetically, to the concept.

2.2 WHAT SORT OF PREDICATION *IS* EXISTENCE-PREDICATION? POSITIVE VIEWS

Having critically reviewed some of the arguments which tell us what sort of a predicate "exists" cannot function as, we are now in a position to appraise suggested ways in which it *can* behave like a predicate. Broadly, two sorts of positive accounts are given. Let us call them *Revisionary* and *Descriptive* accounts respect-

tication the theory could now take either of two general forms, depending upon which of the two major alternative accounts of reference we adopt. We could either take the description-fitting model of reference — or the historical explanation model. A fairly circumspect version of the first broadly Russellian, theory would then rewrite "Vyāsa did not exist" as

"It is not the case that there existed at least and at most one person who was called 'Vyāsa' and who composed the *Mahābhārata* and did most of the things associated with that name."

Using the other theory, as applied to negative existentials by Keith Donnellen, the same statement should be rewritten as:

"The history of the use of the name 'Vyāsa' in the context of predicative statements made in the Indian religious tradition involving singular reference to such a person ends in a block."

Here, by the technical notion of a *block* we are supposed to understand that point in the loosely causal-intentional chain along which a certain use of a name is handed down to us where, instead of a real referent of the name, we only find someone's or some people's mistaken belief (or deliberate pretence or bluff) to the effect that such a referent exists.[23]

There are well-known reasons to reject the Russellian analysis of "Vyāsa does not exist." The real person Vyāsa might have existed without anyone uniquely satisfying the associated cluster of criteria, even without *his* bearing the name Vyāsa. Maybe Vyāsa was not called "Vyāsa," or hundreds of people might have had that name. He might not have composed the *Mahabharata.* Many people together might have collaborated to write that epic. So the analysans may come out true yet the analysandum – the existence-denial — might be false because the person whom we (mistakenly) call "Vyāsa" may have existed. Satisfying the meta-linguistic truth-conditions, thus, is not necessary for the truth of the singular existence-statement. That it is also not sufficient can be proved as follows. If unknown to Tolstoy, there was after all a woman called "Anna Karenina" who had exactly the life that the famous novel describes, the Russellian account will yield the result that, unknown to Tolstoy, Anna Karenina existed. Yet this result cannot be seriously accepted. It is bizarre to suggest that an author can invent a fictional person and talk about her, while the philosopher of language can advise the author that he has unknowingly been speaking of a real person. An accidental fit of a fictional name plus its descriptive baggage with a possible world dweller or an actual person does not make the corresponding existence assertion *true* or possibly true. No more does the actual referent of a name deserve to be recognised as nonexistent if no one uniquely satisfies the descriptive criteria associated with the current use of that name.

The Donnellanian version of the meta-linguistic theory seems to cope better with such difficulties. But consider this imaginable situation: Dickens actually writes a true account of a friend called "Mr Pickwick" in the earlier parts of his novel, so that his use of the name "Pickwick" refers back to a real Mr Pickwick (the novel is, then, meant to be partly biographical). Then gradually he keeps adding fictional elements. At an earlier stage it would still be a fiction about the real Mr Pickwick (like a spurious joke about Ronald Reagan) in the same sense as the Holmes stories are

about London, although fictional details are ascribed to the city. Now, at an unnoticeable and undecidable point, the biographical semifictional novel may have become pure fiction and, thus, the fictional use of the name (for a non-existent game (2) item) can very well historically take off from a genuine factual use. We pick up the use of the name "Mr Pickwick" from Dickens, who, in turn, picks it up from the earlier use of the name in the novel, with no cutoff point in between. The earlier use does not historically go back to a block; it goes back to its real bearer. Thus the referential genealogy of our use of the name "Mr Pickwick" does *not* end in a block. Yet, even in this scenario "Mr Pickwick does not exist" will remain true. I think it often happens that a story initially starts as an imaginary tale about a real individual. There exists an object such that we let ourselves pretend that it has the property ϕ. But at some indefinite point it becomes a tale about an imaginary individual – in some tenuous sense based upon a real one — when we just pretend that there exists this object such that it has the properties ϕ and ψ and ..., subsuming the existential quantifier (and the name with its reference) *within* the make-believe operator.

Of course, the "block" account can be slightly modified to fit even such cases. Although the actual history of a name in a fiction might go back to a real bearer of that name, after finishing the novel the author might revoke his original intention and now want the name's history to be taken as referring to his conjured-up character rather than to the historical individual which might have served as the source of inspiration. The new definition of a *block* might in this way be determined largely by authorial intent. But if "blocks" are defined this way, and the block theory of negative existentials has to be accepted, then we cannot extend the account to cover our existence-denials about mistakenly believed entities. It has been supposed, for instance, that when ancient people discovered fossilised skulls of prehistoric elephant-like creatures, they mistook the nasal cavity for the eye-socket and thus thought the bones belonged to what they thought was a real one-eyed Cyclops. Even griffins are apparently creatures of such crypto-paleontology. The actual history of the "natural kind" name "Cyclops" would then go back to a block, in this case a mistake, rather than a pretence. But if we trace back the history of the intentions of the original users of these kind-names of animals – we might reach the real dinosaurs whose bones were misidentified by ancient zoologists. "The Cyclops never existed" will then become *false* by the intention-governed historical-explanation version of the meta-linguistic theory.[24]

Apart from such detailed objections, there are some general worries which should stop us from embracing any meta-linguistic analysis of existence denials. First, let us look at how we understand true affirmative existentials. After telling the story of Joan of Arc to a young but incredulous listener, I could go on to add: "And Joan of Arc really did exist." Surely I had not switched suddenly from *using* her name to *mentioning* it or to making a remark about the history of my use of her name so far. I still want very much to be taken as talking about *her* – the historic person. If the proponent of the meta-linguistic account permits this in the case of names of actually existent items (as he or she must) but proposes the "speaking-

about-the-use-of-the-name" interpretation only for cases where there is no such real referent, then we face the absurd consequence that our analysis of the meaning of a certain form of sentence would depend upon our assessment of its truth value. If "A exists" is true then it is supposed to be about A; otherwise it has to be about our use of the name "A". This is quite intolerable. A uniform analysis must be given to statements of the form "A exists" irrespective of their truth value. We must be able to *understand* and determine the meaning of a sentence in advance of assessing whether it matches the world — otherwise whose match with the world shall we assess?

The implausibility of the meta-linguistic analysis becomes even clearer when we embed the existence-proposition within intentional contexts. Imagine a primitive community called the Xians who worshipped a certain god to whom they were too reverential to apply any name. Suppose we, who do not believe in that deity, start calling that nameless god "Yamos". Now, we should want to say truly that Yamos does not exist but Xians believed that Yamos exists. Surely Xians could not have believed that the history of *our* use of the name "Yamos" does not go back to a block or believe anything about our use of that name, for that matter. Since they had no use for that name, their existence-belief could not be about any such use. All Xians might be dead (or civilised) before our use of that name came into existence. Its history could not have been continuous with the history of the use of any other name by the Xians. Even a descriptivist unpacking of the meta-linguistic message might fail. Xians might have firmly believed in the existence of Yamos without necessarily holding that all, most, or any of their *introducing descriptions* of that nameless god actually fit him. Yamos's properties might have been considered humanly inaccessible. Their belief in the existence of Yamos, thus, can never be understood in terms of their belief in the truth of the Russellian or Donnellanian meta-linguistic translation of the sentence "Yamos exists" (unless, perhaps, they have been hopelessly proselytized by a Russellian or Donnellanian missionary while retaining their faith in Yamos – which seems unlikely). Even an assertion of the nonexistence of Yamos can only be understood by at least a provisional participation in their belief-world: We have to grasp which specific divinity we are exposing the unreality of.

Finally, even if the meta-linguistic account yields the right truth-conditions for most of our singular negative existentials, it does not show us what the intended content is or what we understand when we grasp an existence-denial or appreciate an existence-doubt. Someone who has no acquaintance with Dickens's novel or its plot can still understand the sentence: "Dickens's use of the proper name 'Mr Micawber' in his novel *David Copperfield* does not or is not purported to pick out any real referent." But such a person will fail to understand the negative existential "Mr Micawber does not exist" which can only be grasped by one who has entered the world of the novel and knows, in the relevant fictional sense, *who* Mr Micawber is. This is, in a way, admitted by Donnellan when he forewarns us that his rule in terms of the notion of a *block* "does not provide an *analysis* of such statements; it does not tell us what such statements mean" (1977, p. 239). It only purports to give the truth-conditions. Giving *truth*-conditions does not necessarily amount to giving *understanding*-conditions. For that matter, any sentence can be given a meta-

linguistic truth-condition. The statement "Thatcher hates Marxists" is true if and only if the referent of the name "Thatcher" satisfies the predicate "... hates Marxists". But someone who can perfectly well understand the meta-linguistic truth-condition can fail to understand the original statement because he might not know who Mrs Thatcher is. This is why meta-linguistic analyses of existentials fail so utterly in indirect contexts. The Greeks are said to believe that Zeus existed. They are not said merely to have believed that the name "Zeus" had a reference! Meta-linguistic accounts look typically inadequate if applied to existential statements made by the use of demonstrative subject-terms. My knowledge that I exist can hardly be taken as my knowledge about the history or the applicability of my use, of the personal pronoun "I". When in the context of a suspect perceptual experience we express our wonder using the indexical: "Does *that* pool of water really exist?" – our wonder cannot be naturally interpreted as wonder about that use of the demonstrative "that". For one thing, a particular use of a certain singular term often cannot be exactly individuated except in terms of its complete history, which would include the referent or its absence (i.e. a block, if there is one). To understand which use is being talked about will then amount to knowing whether it leads to a real referent or to a block. Thus we are back with the repugnant consequence that we cannot know what the sentence says or what is being spoken of unless we know in advance whether the sentence is true or false. Yet, singular existence questions must be capable of being asked with genuine ignorance about their answers. It must therefore be a constraint on any correct *analysis* of the meaning of negative existentials that they are not treated as assertions about names or singular expressions figuring in their subject positions, or about our use of such expressions. Our use of the singular term for subjects of existence-denials obviously has to be special. It cannot commit us beforehand to the existence of an actual referent. But in many cases it surely draws us into the world of make-believe, hallucination, film, superstition or mistaken theory, inside which alone the subject term is given a referring use. Surely, the predicate-part brings us outside into the actual world. But no adequate account of our grasp of the entire statement can be given wholly from the external actual-world point of view where only the term or its use by us is available as a topic of discourse and its putative referent is avowedly missing.

2.22 *Speaking of Senses*

We may not accept that a name is merely mentioned in existential assertions, but that need not mean that it is used with its *customary* reference. Dummett toys with the suggestion that the singular expression in an existential context refers to its own Fregean sense. In a Fregean theory this happens when the name occurs in an opaque context. Now, existential contexts do not show any other standard mark of opacity except (when they are negative) apparent resistance to an existential generalisation over the subject-term. They allow substitution, *salva veritate*, of coreferential terms. If Bacchus never existed, it follows that Dionysius didn't either. Yet, if we can make such sentences speak of the senses of the singular terms, we can

avoid the occasional defect of vacuity, or lack of reference, which Frege was so bothered about. In a normal Fregean account, "Odysseus travelled" will be truth-valueless and this is, in a way, a welcome result. But the same would apply to "Odysseus exists", which we want to be simply false. Dummett tries to remedy this by defining "... exists" as standing for a concept (still first-level, because senses are objects) under which can fall just those senses which are expressed by singular terms *having* actual referents.[25] It is also taken to be a predicate which introduces, nominally, an opaque context (like such technically opaque-making prefixes as "It is true that ...") into a sentence. It turns words, as it were, towards their own customary senses. Since all fictional names have distinct senses (and talking about *them* does not commit us to recognising nonexistent referents), such an account seems to fit our intuitions rather snugly. Are we then saying when we utter the words "Sherlock Holmes does not exist" that the sense given to that name, "Sherlock Holmes", in the stories does not determine any reference? The case for treating existential utterances as occasions for referring to modes of presentation rather than objects presented is actually quite strong. Just as, in reporting other people's beliefs, we do not commit ourselves to talking about the objects putatively referred to by the believer, and want to leave it open whether or not the beliefs are true, or *their* reference actual, in introducing the subjects of existential statements or existence-questions we have to leave it open whether there exists an object to which the subject term refers. That is precisely what the predicate-part is all about.

Hence, the plausibility of the account that the real subject is the sense of the apparent subject-term. Of course *mentioning* the word is one way of speaking about its sense (e.g. "the sense of 'Sherlock Holmes'"), but it is not the only way. According to Frege, we might manage to refer to the senses by *using* the words expressing them in a special indirect way. So the theory amounts to this: existence is a property of the senses of expressions.

I cannot accept this theory due to the following considerations. Apart from the controversies regarding Fregean senses as independent objects which are sufficiently stable and publicly available to provide referents for fictional names, the device is extremely *ad hoc*. If the predicate "... exists" introduces an opaque context, surely its own reference is affected by that? If the predicate customarily refers to the concept under which fall all and only the senses which have some referent to lead to, what would it refer to in an *opaque* context? Surely it would not refer to the same concept but perhaps to some function taking senses to thoughts. We get into muddier hierarchies of senses of predicates having more complicated relations to senses of names to which they are attached in indirect contexts.

The account also becomes unacceptable the moment it is *existence* rather than *determining an actual reference* that is said to be the ascribed attribute of senses. Existence itself can never be a concept under which modes of presentation (alone) can fall. Primarily I think mice, men, mountains and such humdrum objects as we speak of all the time bear the property of existence. Under this theory, when we say "Mount Everest exists", we are not speaking of a mountain but of a mode of presentation. This feels unnatural. Of course, modes of presentations exist too, but that is quite a separate matter.

The informativeness of identity-statements like "Hesperus is Phosphorus" was explained by Frege in terms of the different senses of the coreferential terms; yet it is a mistake to think that Frege treated identity as a relation holding between senses of names. For one thing, the senses have to be *non*-identical! Analogously, the informational context or the surprise-value of a statement like "Elsinore Castle exists" may have to be explained in terms of the sense attached to the words "Elsinore Castle," but it would be mistaken, therefore, to conclude that "... exists" is a predicate which is true of senses rather than castles. Notice that the sense of an empty fictional name is as existent as the sense of the name of a real person or place. Dummett, who reminds us of this crucial distinction between the truth-conditions of a sentence and its informational content in this context (see Dummett, 1981, p. 279) seems to confuse the two by suggesting that we treat "... exists" as a concept under which senses of nonempty singular terms fall.

Besides, the strategy incurs the same "unintuitiveness" regarding the use of non-empty, non-fictional names in existential contexts. Because we switch to existence-assertions (even if trivially and not intending to be informative) from characterisation of other kinds, do we *have* to stop short of talking of the normal reference of "Socrates" by using that name in the subject position? Succumbing in this way to the pressure of talking about sense, even when straight references are available, paves the way to a uniformly intensional account – an account which construes all contexts as indirect ones and lets us talk of nothing besides senses of names.

2.23 *Speaking of Offices*

Such a uniformly intensional theory would be proposed by Castañeda and Pavel Tichy,[26] who take existence statements as saying that certain guises or offices are assumed or occupied by some entity. When we say that God exists, or that Holmes does not, we are saying about the "things-to-be" which are picked out, designated by those disguised definite descriptions, that something or nothing is actually that thing-to-be. The "is" is not of identity or of constitution, but closer to, though not quite the same as, the "is" of exemplification. This account has its own initial charms. Our *attributive* uses of definite descriptions yield most easily to this model of speaking about the office and only indirectly about whoever occupies it. The referential use can be taken as a special case of talking about the particular occupant at present, etc. The theory, of course, discriminates between genuine names which refer to extensional office holders without any mediations and definite descriptions which parade themselves like names. Thus, when a teenager in Bombay says that she wants to be Elizabeth Taylor, she does not mean the absurdity that she wants to be identical with another individual, namely the one who actually is Elizabeth Taylor. All she means is that she would like to be in her position, to have all that it takes to be the celebrity that is Elizabeth Taylor. The name there stands for an office.

> Thus, to say that the King of France does not exist is just a brief way of saying that the office of King of France is vacant. The topic of the statement is the office, not any particular individual.
>
> Tichy (1979) p. 405

The notion of an office can be encashed in terms of a set of properties or, more sophisticatedly, as a function from possible worlds to individuals.

This account also has the obvious merit of solving the problem concerning the Ontological Argument or any difficulty of the sort faced by phrases like "the existent golden-mountain". Since existence (= being occupied) is said to be the property of an office, it cannot be the *requisite* of an office. Requisite properties are those which an occupier must possess in order to fill an office. No office can necessitate its being occupied (though, of course, every office requires the existence of its occupiers if it has any) since existence is equivalent to actual occupation, which is a property of the office itself.

But do existence-statements talk of the office quite in the same manner as clear examples of sentences referring to offices rather than occupiers do? If we take "The American President has a wife named Hillary" as an example of talk about a particular office-occupier as against "The American President is elected democratically" which talks about the office, do we feel inclined to subsume "The American President does not exist" (uttered when Kennedy died, or due to some political upheaval, the post remains vacant for some time, so that no one *is* the American President) under the former type or the latter? The answer depends very much on the context. Surely not all existence-assertions would be such as to justify our adopting the latter model.[27] As a general theory of existential-statements, the intensional object theories have little credibility.

They are based on a distinction between properties of office-occupiers and those of the office, which the unique property of existence mysteriously seems to elude. Certainly, corresponding to every existence-statement there is some news about office occupation, which may be conveyed collaterally. Yet, it is inescapably felt to be peculiar information about the office-occupier, rather than about the office itself, that an individual exists. The account tends to ignore the clear cases of existence-assertions (trivial or non-trivial, affirmative or negative, modal or non-modal) which make genuine use of proper names. Its treatment of fictional names as definite descriptions is counter-intuitive. In *Oliver Twist* it is true that "Fagin" would have referred to Fagin even if he did not occupy any of the lowly offices that he in fact (i.e. in fiction) does.

We might, of course, need to treat predicative fictional assertions quite distinctly from (outside) existential statements using fictional subject-terms. Complaining about a theory simply because it treats reference in existential and predicative contexts differently is not justified. As Peacocke[28] has shown, uniformity might be a "chimera" in this context. It should rather count as a virtue of a theory that it treats questions of reference in two different manners: inside the fictional game in predicational contexts and outside the fictional game in existential contexts.

Casteñada tries to achieve this undesirable uniformity and ends up with a very roundabout, artificial theory of predication in terms of consubstantiation, consociation, etc. — relations further and further removed from our ordinary understanding of predication. Whether in fictional or in actual contexts, in existential or in predicative sentences, Casteñeda's definite descriptions refer always to existentially suspended, neutral, intensional entities.[29] He admits that upon his account all our talk is virtually to be placed in *oratio obliqua*. This is obviously too high a price to pay for a uniformity which is not even worth seeking.

To summarise my qualms now, the so-called "office of Sherlock Holmes" may actually be fortuitously occupied without making it true that Sherlock Holmes exists. Unless one embraces the awkward alternative that only fictional names refer to offices, one has to reduce, in the same way as Russell, even non-vacuous names to definite descriptions. Our names would then not be bearable by *who* we are but borne by *what* we are. Such a theory itself is intolerable. The theory cannot reconcile itself to the peculiar feature of existence-statements that they can rigidly be *about* individual office-occupiers yet convey information which is contingently true of *all* actual occupiers of every office. "Occupiedness" or "unoccupiedness" may be a property of offices, but it is misleading to say existence or nonexistence is. I am sure that some offices themselves, whether occupied or unoccupied, have existence too. One is not too sure whether they can absolutely lack it. After all, unoccupied offices *do* exist. An office (being a game (4) item) could, however, temporarily or permanently go out of existence by abolition, or come back into existence by, for example, revival. The above account of existence-assertions either completely ignores the referential use of definite descriptions or introduces an arbitrary opportunistic distinction between talking directly referentially about objects and talking via the "things-to-be" that they match. Our subject-expressions are either eternally debarred from referring to extensional items or else some of them, and there is no telling *which* ones just from their use, refuse to latch on to entities. The intensionalist starts from some robust intuitive ground. But like many other models, his semantics of offices proves too rigid for our ascription of the unique (contingent yet universal) property of existence about which the arch-intensionalist remarks with resignation, "Existence is mysterious" (Casteñeda 1974 p. 21.)

2.24 *Of Propositional Functions or Concepts*

The only other theory of the revisionary kind we shall consider is the very powerful Russell–Frege theory, which was anticipated at different stages in the first part of this chapter. It has been more often put in the negative form that existence is not a property at all, but it can be tolerably accurately phrased as the view that existence is the property of concepts[30] or of propositional functions. However, one can urge a literalistic objection against such a formulation. Moore rightly complained that when we say "Tigers exist" we do not in any sense mean to assert the *existence* of the propositional function: "*x* is a tiger". Perhaps the objection is deeper than just an appeal to what we are or are not ready to say in the vernacular. The logical consequence of Russell's view that existence is a property of propositional functions, we saw, was the absurd view that no single actual thing of this world can be said to exist.[31]

Let us examine the Fregean version of the view. To say "Dummett exists" is to say that the concept of being Dummett has something falling under it.

Despite all its attractiveness, the theory runs into grave difficulties. The concept, property or function which is taken as the *real* subject of an existential assertion can be taken either as a *saturated* or as an *unsaturated* entity (to use a Fregean distinction). The versions of this view which speak of property or properties appear to take the former alternative. The mark of saturatedness, of course, is that it can be designated by a non-predicative singular expression. Thus, we can account for the truth and informativeness of

"An F (or some F's) exist(s)" ... E1

by the regimentation:

"The concept of an F is instantiated" ... E2.

But if the subject-term of E2 designates a concept, property or function and ascribes to it another property, the truth or falsehood of E2 surely presupposes the truth of the proposition

"The concept of an F exists" ... E3.

Now, E3 demands, by the same reasoning, a higher-order reading.

"The concept of the concept of an F is instantiated" ... E4.

The regression can be stopped by curtailing the coverage of the explanation. For instance, we can hold that the instantiation account is meant only for explicitly general existentials of the "there are" or "some" forms. Once we pass from "Some tame tigers exist" to "The concept of a tame tiger is exemplified", we cannot further demand a similar step. For, this time, the presupposed existential will be singular: "The concept of a tame tiger exists." The regress might terminate at E3, but the account will be severely mutilated. There are obvious problems concerning individual concepts, e.g., the concept of (being the same as?) Shakespeare. The *right* group of essential descriptions may not be available for a verbal capturing of the concept. But granting that we do have concepts corresponding to every singular term so that the view can be generalised for both singular and general existentials, is the regress vicious at all? We might think that it is not, because although it entails the existence of an infinite number of higher level concepts, it does not require of us that for grasping the meaning of E1 type sentences we have to understand and check the truth values of E2, E4, E6, ... and all sorts of higher-level instantiation claims.

The regress itself might be harmless but the view does look circular, in so far as it attempts to illuminate the putatively unclear structure of existence-assertions by appeal to an even obscurer predication pattern which itself presupposes an existential truth. The relation of instantiation which is supposed to hold between the two sorts of entities, namely properties and exemplifiers, or functions and arguments, is not quite the relation which is said to hold between one property (or concept) and a higher-order property (or concept). All we know about such relations (and we do

need to know more if we construe existential judgments in their terms) is that they are irreflexive, asymmetric and intransitive. Logicians have often denied that the tie which is said to exist between properties and instantiators is a relation *at all*. Thus, the view that existence is a property of certain higher-order *entities*, such as concepts or properties, does not seem acceptable.

The only alternative is to follow Frege himself in characterising concepts as unsaturated entities denotable only by "gappy" predicate expressions. Is existence, then, a property of such unsaturated entities? Frege faced well-known difficulties concerning such entities and their nameable correlates, like the designata of substantial expressions such as "The concept of F" or "The concept 'f'". We can ask the pertinent question: do Fregean concepts exist in the same sense as Fregean objects? Complications soon arise with the *concept of a horse*, which is an object. In fact, we are not only led to apparently paradoxical statements but to real paradoxes. The entity referred to by "... is a horse" is not an object, although what is referred to by "The entity referred to by '... is a horse'" is an object, because the expression is a definite description.

Thus we reach the incoherent position that being non-empty is both a first-level property (because it is a property of the *object* designated by "The incomplete entity referred to by '... is an F'") and a second-level property. It is a first-level property of certain concept correlates which fall *under* it and a second-level one of certain first-level concepts which fall *within* it.[32]

The only apparent merit of the Russellian variant of the second-level predication account is that with its device of definite descriptions which it applies to all ordinary proper names it can handle with greater uniformity both singular and general existentials. But, in so far as it does so, it falls foul of an incorrect account of singular existentials. As we have already found out, the unique instantiation of a single property or cluster of properties is neither necessary nor sufficient for the truth of a singular affirmative existential made by the use of a name. Causal theorists of proper names have shown convincing reasons to reject the Russellian equation of "Socrates did not exist" with "It is false that one and only one person did all that is attributed to a certain character called 'Socrates' by Plato, etc".

2.25 *Descriptive Theories*

Thus, getting the most important types of *revisionary* accounts of existence statements out of our way, we shall now briefly examine the *descriptive* theories which try to keep faithful to the surface indication that it is the river Mississippi or the river Styx itself that is said to be existent or nonexistent.

The most obvious way to satisfy this demand of being true to the surface structure of existence-denials and existence-assertions is, of course, Meinongian. We can hold that corresponding to every non-contradictory set (i.e. not containing a property and its direct complement) of properties *there is* an object (when the "there is" does not contain any existential load whatsoever, not even the thinnest kind of being or subsistence) which has just those properties. Existence, of course,

is not a property of that sort because it is "extra-nuclear".[33] Nuclear properties are those determinations which constitute the nature (*Sosein*) of an object, independently of whether or not it exists. Obviously, existence is not nuclear in this sense because no object can have existence independently of whether or not it exists. Being cannot be beyond being and nonbeing. Extra-nuclear properties cannot be included in the description of a Meinongian pure object. Thus, "the round square which has extra-nuclear existence" is not a permissible description of a pure object. But extra- nuclear predicates are as much first-level predicates of objects as are nuclear predicates. Many of these objects do not exist because they essentially have properties which cannot be had by any single actual object. The objects which are actually found to exist usually possess an *infinite* number of properties because they are complete and determinate over every pair of complementary properties within the domain of which they fall. The predication of existence consists in an ascription of an extra-nuclear predicate to such an object. Such a theory needs a great deal of logical manoeuvring to take care of problems concerning indeterminacy, apparent breach of the law of contradiction, etc. (which we shall touch upon in the chapter concerning fictional discourse). The chief source of dissatisfaction with such a theory is the obscurity around the crucial distinction between extra-nuclear and nuclear predicates. In a subsequent section (4.3) I have examined and rejected the Meinongian theory of the reference of fictional proper names in greater detail.

Here, we shall first consider a first-level attributive account of existence which retains the assumption that everything exists and is, thus, still Russellian in spirit. It avoids, unlike the Meinongian version of the attributive account, positing nonexistent objects as falling under the inapplicability range of the existence-predicate.[34] Apparently the only plausible alternative to the Meinongian account, this broadly Russellian view takes "exists" as a predicate true of every individual. It is a redundant one in the sense that it would make singular statements always true, if affirmative, and always false, if negative. A genuinely singular term by the use of which we can impart any information is one which designates an actually existent (or once existent) object, about which we can either say truly (and, of course, pointlessly) that it exists (or did at one time) or falsely that it does not (and never did). But there is no genuine (Russellian) singular term by the use of which we can say about its referent truly (or even possibly truly) that it does not *really* exist (and never did or would exist, as is implied by the "really").

Both Moore, who agrees with the general drift of the theory of definite descriptions, and Kripke (though he ceremonially refutes the Russellian theory of proper names) try to give a general explanation of singular existence-denials assuming existence to be a universally satisfied first-level predicate.

It was Moore who first noticed that "This might not have existed" has a decent truth claim though "This does not exist" is bound to express a false proposition if it expresses any proposition at all. The former statement cannot be interpreted as meaning that it could be *true* (or could be said truly on any other possible world) that this does not exist. Analogously, "Humpty Dumpty does not exist" has to be counted as making a true statement, although if "Humpty Dumpty" is a name without a bearer, then the above statement (like its affirmative obverse) cannot be used to make any serious statement whatsoever.

The way out towards which Moore gestured is to take singular negative existential statements as saying that there is no such *true* proposition such that Sherlock Holmes exists; indeed that no such proposition exists. To eliminate apparent *use* of the empty name, even in this account, can be done by giving a meta-linguistic account of (negative) existential statements, this time at the sentential level: the sentence "Sherlock Holmes exists" does not express any proposition, hence it does not express any true proposition. But we do not want a meta-linguistic account of any sort. It could be suggested that we have to take the negation in the natural language statement as not being equivalent to "It is false that ..." but rather as meaning "It is not true that ...", taking the latter as a special operator which yields a true sentence if and only if it is affixed to a sentence which, though used, fails to express any proposition. Against such an account (as it was sketched, reportedly, by Saul Kripke in his unpublished John Locke Lectures), the following questions arise.

First, how is the name "S.H." *used* in the sentence "There is no such true proposition as that S.H. really lived in London"? We need the problematic notion of *quasi-intentional* use of a name by which we draw ourselves partly into the game of make-believe where we can locate our fictional referent and yet not get committed to the existence of such a referent. Yet Kripke does not make this phenomenon of being at the same time in and out of a make-believe clear. Second, in the Moore–Kripke solution of the problem there is also a vague worry about having to designate or, at least, describe a nonexistent but possible proposition. After having ceremonially rejected the meta-linguistic account, Kripke cannot paraphrase "A does not exist" as "No true proposition is expressed by 'A exists'." It seems that the problem which plagued us when we found ourselves apparently picking out an object in order to announce about it that it is, alas, not one of the things that *can* be seriously picked out is precisely the problem facing us here, not at the level of *things* but this time at the level of *propositions*. For we interpret the negator of singular existence as saying that a certain true proposition which might have existed does not exist. Also, the fully-fledged form of this "no proposition" theory of negative existentials requires a special negation solely for these contexts; otherwise, even "Sherlock Holmes did not know English" would appear to be true because it is true that no proposition is expressed by the sentence "Sherlock Holmes did know English". We shall evaluate this "special negation" theory of existence-denials in greater detail in the last chapter of the book, where, I hope, our reasons for rejecting it will become clear.

Ultimately, therefore, just as a classical Russellian in the spirit of *repairing* ordinary language would treat "Hamlet does not exist" as a logically unwary way of saying, "It is not true that anyone was really called 'Hamlet' and did most of the things that Shakespeare relates", Kripke too offers us a suggestion which finds *fault* with the straightforward reading of negative existentials and substitutes for it another kind of *more careful* reading. But I want to honour the ordinary language

intuition that when I say that Hamlet does not exist, I am still talking about Hamlet. I think that if I had said that Pegasus existed I would have said something false rather than just failing to say something true or simply failing to say anything. I would have expressed a false awareness rather than expressing *no* awareness at all. How can I do that?

2.26 *Existence as a Master-Game Property*

Taking lessons from that line of approach, I might offer my own theory of absolute existence-denials in the backdrop of my picture of stratified language-games.

Thanks to the master-game we can pick out Pickwick within the Dickens sub-game of game (2) by our singular (and, if I may say so, extensionally referential) use of his name and then, having taken up a game (1) stance, announce that *he* is not to be found in this actuality-game or game (1). The question of seeking him in game (3) or (4) does not arise because the context from which we pick up our reference to him is not that of talk about dreams or painted, hallucinated or abstract objects.

Thus, upon our interpretation there remains no mystery or paradox about denying the existence of an item outside its game of origin. Just as I can refer to a person whom I saw in another room and say that he is not in this room, I can say about a particular identified item of game (2) or (3) that that item is not an actual item of game (1). There is, however, no possibility of thus coherently denying the existence of an item by referring to it directly, if the item happens to be one genuinely singled out in game (4), i.e. an abstract object – because each designatable item of this game exists in the absolute sense. Of course, a nominalist would like to consider game (4) to be as fictional as game (2). But even the nominalist should allow existential generalisation *within* game (4). Even for a realist like me, some bogus singular terms putatively referring to abstract entities will crop up in game (4). Thus the style of Tarski's oil-painting does not exist. There simply is no such style. No one ever *referred* to it even in make-believe. Apparently singular negative existentials about abstract entities (e.g. "The even prime number larger than 2 does not exist") have to be surrendered to a Russellian

$$\sim (\exists x)\ (Fx \text{ and } (\forall y)\ (Fy \rightarrow x = y))$$

sort of reading, with "x"'s ranging over numbers, styles, and other such individuals of game (4).

The major problem for a descriptive account of existence as a first-level property comes from notorious descriptions like "the existent golden mountain". To avoid this problem Meinong made the nuclear–extra-nuclear distinction which appears to label the problem rather than solve it.[35] Why is it all right to predicate existence to objects, yet not permissible to describe or define an object as (necessarily) existent?

Within the framework of our several language-games, presided over by the master-game, this problem does not seem to arise. The objects which are referred to in the master-game are, without exception, available inside some special game or another. It is not possible within the game of fiction — however emphatic, vivid or explicit the qualifiers such as "real", "actual", or "spatio-temporal" sitting in front of "existence" may seem – to define anything beyond fictional existence into an item of that game. Items of the game of actual-world description are such that they all exist (at some time or other) contingently, and their existence precedes reference to them so that, there, the addition of existence as a characterisation of a designated item would be strictly pleonastic.

There is no scope for forming independent objects in the Game* itself. Its referential resources are, without exception, borrowed from those of the other games. Thus, even if existence-assertions and existence-denials are made possible within the master-game (Game*) without any detriment to their singularity or referential claims, the Ontological Argument has no higher hope of success in the games-structure. As to the existent golden mountain, *if a story is told about it*, it will be existent inside the game of fiction. But it will be as unavailable for singular reference in game (1) as its barer version – the golden mountain; hence in the master-game we have to say that it does not exist after all. An expression like "The golden mountain which exists by the standards of the master-game" will naturally be regarded as ill-formed since it tries to perform an impossible feat, namely refer to the master-game itself as an identifiable item of that game. We cannot possibly use the *game of chess* as a piece in a game of chess.

The question: What proposition is expressed by an existence-denial which spans across two different language games ? remains an exceedingly difficult one. But since we definitely *understand* existence-enquiries and existence-denials — that they express some graspable content and distinct contents for distinct nonexistent subjects must be admitted. When, after reading or hearing the stories about King Arthur, someone says, "King Arthur did not exist", one is not just commenting on *whether or not any proposition is expressed by talking about "King Arthur"*. One is just saying that if we search for this legendary king in real history we shall fail to find him, and that whoever says that he existed says something which is false, (false *in* this actual world but not false *of* something in it).

At the end of this long-winded tangled tale about the logical form of existence-assertions I must ask *myself*: is "... exists" a predicate? And the answer I return is: Yes, by all means. I do not find any compelling argument for the clear conclusion that it is not a predicate of any kind at all. Then the next question is: is it a first-level predicate of ordinary everyday objects? Once again there are excellent justifications for answering "yes". One can keep faith with Quine's intuition that to exist is to be one of everything and regard existing as a trivial property that every real individual bears. Like being one of twelve, but unlike being twelve, existing or being one of everything is a property of each of the Apostles. Properties need not necessarily be lackable in order to be bearable. Alternatively, and in sharp contrast, one can argue for what Timothy Williamson[36] has recently developed as "one decreasingly unpopular response", namely the view that actual existence is eminently lackable too. There are objects — possible, fictional, unborn, even impossible says

Williamson, which do not exist. Unlike "... is an object", which would be a universal logical predicate, "... exists" would then be a *non*-universal, non-logical empirical predicate – which is true of some objects but false of others. It looks as if philosophers like Nathan Salmon and Timothy Williamson are of late opening up the possibility of a *non-Meinongian* account of existence-assertions as not only predicative in form but also informative in content. I am not proposing anything as radical, since my own understanding of non-actual dwellers of other possible worlds is very dim. With my picture of both serious and playful contexts of conversation overlooked by a double-natured stocktaking sort of talk, I have tried to provide a middle course between Quine's conservatism that existence is an illusory because universal property of all entities and the new "possibilism" that it is a genuine because non-universal property of some entities. I believe that within each ordinary language-game existence is a universal but genuine property of individual topics of conversation. Existence assertions remain strictly newsless within game (1). Even if we treat them as predicative, the predicate is universal and non-distinguishing. Since the master-game gives referential access to the nonexistent natives of literary fictional plots or items from trick photography, painted or dreamt-up scenes, in it we can safely treat existence as not only a property but a scarce property of some ontologically lucky individual targets of conversational reference.

NOTES

[1] Quoted in Rescher's "*Essays in Philosophical Analysis*", p. 79.

[2] See "*Existence*" (1987) by Nathan Salmon where he argues that all three of the following popular views are mistaken:

- [a] "Exists" does not function as a first-level predicate.
- [b] There is no property or concept of existence for individuals.
- [c] Existence cannot be used as a constitutive concept to construct a complex concept of an object.

[3] *Treatise*, Bk. 1, Pt. III/8n.1.

[4] "By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing, even if we completely determine it – we do not make the least addition to the thing when we further declare that the thing *is*. Otherwise it would not exactly be the same thing that exists, but something more than what we thought in the concept; and we could not, therefore, say that the exact object of my concept exists" (Kant, ibid., B 628).

[5] See section called "The Postulates of Empirical Thought" in C.P.R. B. 266–79.

[6] C.P.R. B 284.

[7] "By means of the predicate existence, I add nothing to the thing, but add the thing itself to the concept." Quoted by Dryer (1966) from some little-known work of Kant. See especially pp. 57–63 of *The One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, a translation of *Der Einzig Mögliche Beweisgrund* by Gordon Treash, New York, 1979 (Aboris Books). In this work Kant gives a more unguarded expression to the view that existence is not an ordinary predicate. But even there he had no tendency to categorise it as a property of properties.

[8] This distinction between Kant's "thought of a thing" and Frege's "concept" is often overlooked. Haaparanta (1986) forgets that, for Frege, concepts belong to the realm of reference while thoughts belong to the realm of sense when she remarks: "For Kant, existence is a predicate of a thought concerning an object. The same holds true of Frege since, in his view, objects exist for us only as subsumed under concepts" (p. 279).

[9] The peculiarity of the existence-predicate which should be noted here is that though its own conceptual content is of purely a priori origin (and the basis of a synthetic a priori principle: *the second postulate of empirical thought*), its ascription to any object of thought can be warranted only by the thought of the object being *empirically* grounded. It might be possible to know the existence of an unperceived object, *relatively* a priori, on the basis of its inferred causal connections with some already perceived items. But, in general: "Our knowledge of the existence of things reaches then, only so far as perception and its advance according to empirical laws can extend" (*C.P.R.* B 274).

An even more diligent scholar of Kant might find a key to the solution of this paradoxical double nature of existence as an attribute of objects in Kant's idea of the mediating representation which makes application of the pure concept of existence to a slice of sensible (intuition-given) material possible. "The schema of actuality is existence in some determinate time". (*C.P.R.*, A 145).

It is because the pure category of existence casts an image on the pure but intuitive form of sensibility, namely the image of occupation of a specific stretch of time, that the formal predicate of existence requires some empirical representation or other of an object in time to support its application.

This too raises fresh suspicions regarding the Fregean reading of Kant from a different direction. The existence which Kant talks about in this passage, as something which can never be contained in the concept of the subject but accrues to it only by virtue of the subject being related to the content of experience as a whole, looks more like Frege's notion of *Wirklichkeit* (actuality) rather than that of *Esgibtexistenz*. And about *Wirklichkeit* even Frege clearly says that it is a first-level predicate.

[10] *Is Existence a Predicate?* by D.F. Pears, in Strawson (ed.) (1967).

[11] The idea of this example of the refutation of this argument comes from Strawson (1974).

[12] The best defence of the Frege–Russell–Quine view is in C.J.F. Williams, *What is Existence?* (1981) and the best attack against it is in Orenstein (1978) *Existence and The Particular Quantifier*.

[13] Russell, *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 241.

[14] E.g. Barry Miller (1992) pp. 69–78.

[15] See Appendix.

[16] *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 233.

[17] See Geach (1968) *What Actually Exists* for a clear exposition of this distinction.

[18] Dummett (1981) *The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy*, p. 393.

[19] This concept, Kant says in a tell-tale parenthesis, "is a determination of my state" (*C.P.R.* B 627).

[20] Bennett (1974) *Kant's Dialectic*, pp. 228–32.

[21] Hintikka (1981), *Kant on Existence Predication and the Ontological Argument*.

[22] The strongest defence of the meta-linguistic view of singular existentials is to be found in *Is Existence a Predicate*? by R.B. Redmon (1978). Also see his paper "Exists" in *Mind*, January 1973.

[23] See 'Speaking of Nothing' by Donnellan in Schwartz (1977) p. 237.

[24] I am grateful to Adrienne Mayor for the information concerning griffins and the Cyclops.

[25] Dummett (1981) p. 278–81.

[26] Castañeda (1975) and Tichý (1979). Also see Gregory Currie's *The Nature of Fiction*, Cambridge, (1990), pp. 171–180 for a critical discussion of these types of account.

[27] If the statement is made when America ceases to have a presidential form of government, it will have the latter meaning. If it means that George Bush might not have been born, then the utterance "The American President might not have existed" fits the former model, when appropriately timed.

[28] In Blackburn (1975) p. 129.

[29] See also Casteñeda (1974).

[30] Since Frege says, ("I call the concepts under which an object falls its properties", Frege 1968, p. 51).

[31] "... the actual things that there are in this world do not exist ... to say that they do exist is strictly nonsense, but to say that they do not exist is also strictly nonsense" (Russell, 1918, p. 233).

[32] I have borrowed this pair of terms, as well as my above general criticisms of Frege from Chipman, unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1971.

[33] For explanations of "extra-nuclear properties", see Karel Lambert (1983) *Meinong and the Principle of Independence*, pp. 22–32.

[34] We shall not consider the view, sometimes forwarded by Rescher, that "Pegasus does not exist" negates actual existence about a merely possible object denoted by "Pegasus".

[35] He could even have perfectly happily said, "The golden mountain which really exists does really exist but it does not *really exist*" – hastening, perhaps, to clarify the distinctness of the meaning of the last use of "really exists"; Parsons (1980) pp. 44, 73.
[36] "Necessary Identity and Necessary Existence" in *Wittgenstein – Towards a Re-Evaluation*, edited by Haller and Brandl (Wein, 1990). Especially see p. 173 where he explains why this is not a Meinongian view.

CHAPTER 3
SINGULAR DEATH-SENTENCES

"And how shall we bury you?" asked Crito.
"In any way you like" said Socrates, chuckling quietly, "if you can get hold of *me*, and I don't elude you."

Phaedo

3.10 IS "EXISTS" EQUIVOCAL?

Unicorns do not exist. Dinosaurs do not exist either. The sentence-frame "... does not exist" is used in ordinary language not only to reveal the unreality of certain items which are talked or written about, believed in, dreamt of or depicted, but also to report demise or extinction. That the existence-predicate serves to express two quite easily distinguishable concepts in these two kinds of use can be made clear by two simple idiomatic expansion tests. When we report the current nonexistence of prehistoric mammoths or of the Euston Arch we can smoothly add "now", "any longer" or "these days" to the assertion. But it would be odd and misleading to say that Centaurs do not exist *now* or that El Dorado does not exist *any longer* (unless the appropriate mythology specifies that they would be extinct by the end of the twentieth century and we are asserting a fictional truth). Conversely, when we assert the absolute nonexistence of a particular hallucinated elf or of a very life-like fictional detective, we can idiomatically insert "really" between "does not" and "exist". It would be quite awkward and misleading to do the same with our reports of present nonexistence. We might expand "Miss Marple does not exist" to "Miss Marple does not *really* exist" but would not expand "Agatha Christie does not exist" in the same way. Of course, we could *exploit* this ambiguity of "exists" and make statements like "Atlantis does not exist", meaning, non-committally as it were, that either it was always imaginary or even if it once existed it no longer does, because according to the legend itself it went under the ocean in the year 950 B.C.

At this point we are tempted to compare not existing *now* with not being present *here*. If local absence or not being in a place has nothing to do with nonexistence or not being there at all, why should temporal absence or not being there now have anything more to do with it? But the comparison may be only superficial. Temporal absence *is* closer to nonexistence *simpliciter* than spatial absence. It remains true

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 63–79.

that if something does not exist at all, then it also does not exist now; and if something does not exist now, then as far as the present time is concerned, it simply does not exist anywhere, in any sense. This closer connection between being and being in a particular *time* becomes clearer if we consider not-yet-existent entities. As long as Russell had not been born, it was true that there existed no such individual. It is not as if he already existed but was lurking in the future. Now we can successfully refer to him (although he is dead and has lapsed into total nonexistence again by his own admission) and talk about his prenatal nonexistence. Yet even as a topic of singular future-tense statements he was not available during the period before his birth. That way the future seems to be as nonexistent now as the merely possible but non-actual. (But there are subtler distinctions here to which we shall presently return.)

Thus the existence which Pegasus or Pickwick lacks for ever and that which Jeremy Bentham (in spite of his surviving skeleton at University College, London) or "Newperson 1" (the first child to be born in the twenty-first century) lacks now are clearly of two different orders.[1] But surely they are not *so* unrelated to each other that the use of the common verb "to exist" for both of these concepts should be as equivocal as the use of the verb "to lie"!

Existence in the first sense, namely being there at all or being real (let us call this "$existence_R$"), as we have seen in the previous chapter, can be either looked upon as a quantifier *or* as a first-level predicate true of every single thing that we can seriously talk about. It can also be viewed as a non-trivial predicate which can be informatively affirmed or truly denied of individual items of one language-game only from the point of view of another special and more inclusive language-game. I think it is only by embracing the third option that the puzzle of tenseless singular negative existentials can be solved.

In this chapter we pick up for discussion the second sense of existence. This is the sense in which the dead, the unborn, the yet-to-be-built and the demolished are deprived of existence. Let us mark off uses which capture this sense with the expression "$existence_N$" standing for *existence-now*. Just as to be clear about $existence_R$ we have to be clear about our use of singular terms putatively referring to items which do not $exist_R$, in order to throw more light on $existence_N$ we have to understand our use of expressions referring to deceased and forthcoming individuals which do not $exist_N$. So we shall deal with three major questions in this chapter:

a. Can we refer successfully to now nonexistent past and future individuals?
b. What sort of a predicate is "... $exists_N$"? How is it related to "... $exists_R$"?
c. Can we somehow express cessations just in terms of the existential quantifier, some familiar sortal predicates and identity without bringing in a new primitive first-level predicate like "... $exists_N$"?

I do not hope to solve here the problem of successful reference to deceased items. My limited purpose is to show that no game shift is needed for such tensed denials of the current survival of an item. We do not need a special language-game to talk about the dead.

3.11 *The Name of the Broken Tool*

In the crucial passages 40–43 of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein discusses the conceptual connections between the current existence of the bearer of a name and the name having a reference at all. Even in the context of the conjectured Augustinian basic language where words gain meaning by getting individual referents assigned to them, does the name become reference-less, and hence meaningless, when the bearer of the name perishes? Obviously not, answers Wittgenstein, because the name might still continue to have the same *use*.

One could try to understand this by making a subtle distinction between the *referent* (bearer) and the *reference* of a name. The bearer's destruction strips the name of its referent but not of its reference. The name keeps making reference to the destroyed entity. At least in the death report "Mr N.N. is dead", the name "Mr N.N." is *used* with the same reference. Even if one believes that the only meaning of a name is its reference, such reference or meaning does not die with the death of the bearer of the name. Hence it is concluded, apparently against Russell and early Wittgenstein, that it is not the actual existence of the bearer but the actual use of the name in communication situations which makes it meaningful. This is then generalised about other sorts of expressions. Thus, it is from the use of singular terms in tensed denials of existence that Wittgenstein arrives at his celebrated "*Use*-theory of meaning".

Now, what is it for a name with a broken bearer still to have a use or "a place in the language-game"? As long as the conventions of the game prescribe some appropriate behaviour patterns on the part of the receiver of the name-command "N", under the circumstances that the tool called "N" is broken, the command still has a role as a legitimate move in the game. Of course, if the agreed rule of the game was such that the moment the object is destroyed its name goes out of circulation, then the receiver of such a command would have had to "stand there at a loss". The other possible response that Wittgenstein imagines is for the bearer to come back with the remaining pieces of the named object. This need not correspond to the implausible philosophical theory that our use of the proper name of a dead person picks out the corpse. For all we can ordinarily perceive, the bearer of the name may just vanish without a trace.[2] I think even such a report of complete disappearance could refer to the *other* things which remain. Bringing back some of the other tools could be a sophisticated way of saying that none of these remaining tools are the same as N. But notice that even then the reference to N cannot be helped. But, of course, Wittgenstein's own favoured response to the use of such a name would be for the receiver of the command to shake his head in dissent. This shake of the head would correspond to announcing about N that it is broken and could not be brought.

What is interesting is that Wittgenstein feels constrained to extend this very gesture for denial of availability to cover also the response to the use of absolutely empty names.

> But has for instance a name which has *never* been used for a tool also got a meaning in that game? Let us assume that "X" is such a sign and that A gives this sign to B. Well, even such signs could be given a place in the language-game, and B might have, say, to answer them too with a shake of the head ...
>
> (*P.I.* § 42)

Wittgenstein does leave a hint of his sensitivity to the distinction between our denials of existence$_N$ and our denials of existence$_R$. He adds that in the latter case our use of the name of the nonexistent tool and the shake of the head in response to such a use would be "a sort of joke between" the conniving user of the name and the sporting denier of existence. Yet he seems to have felt constrained to say that if we can use the proper name of a tool meaningfully after the tool is broken, we should be able to give use and hence meaning to names of nonexistent tools too. Commentators (e.g. Baker and Hacker) have conjectured that he might have been arguing in the following fashion:

(1) If we can name past items, then we can name future items.
(2) If we can name future items, then we can name fictional items.
(3) We can name past items.

∴ We can name fictional items.

I shall try to show that the first premise of this argument is not compelling. Although antenatal nonexistence and post-mortem nonexistence are equally varieties of nonexistence$_N$, our singular reference to the deceased seems to go through in a way in which our references to forthcoming items at best only remain attempts awaiting ensured success. The "use-theory" of meaning of proper names *might* be extended to cover fictional proper names on independent grounds. But the argument for that extension cannot be based on our use of names of things which have gone out of existence through a logical "slope" via our attempted reference to things which have not yet come to exist. To succumb to such a slope argument is to blur the distinction we have drawn between game (1) and game (2). First let us see how such a slippery logical slide might *appear* to be irresistible.

We must remember that we are still arguing about what we can or cannot name or talk singularly about in game (1). This game does not allow us to make a committed reference to the Tooth Fairy because there *is* no such person. Yet, even in this game, it seems, we have to admit that we can and do refer to Socrates when he is dead and simply not there at all. Do we *understand* his name completely if we just know how to use it and how to respond behaviourally to someone else's use of it in a sentence? Don't we have to know in some sense who is being talked about? And how do *we* who live thousands of years after his death manage to do that? Since we cannot avoid or paraphrase away singular reference to the dead we must, it seems, give up the rule that existence at time t_n of an object is essential for our reference to it, made at time t_n, to be successful.[3] But once we lift that restriction we immediately face the question whether our attempted reference to future items – equally lacking existence$_N$ – can be consummated in advance of their actual emergence.[4] Of course, in planning and proposing projects we do use names and definite descriptions purportedly referring to not-yet-existent items. The typical medieval example was the name "Antichrist". Hindus believe that "Kalki" is a name which now picks out the tenth reincarnation of the god Vishnu who is going to be born thousands of years from now. Such names *claim* to be more than just surrogates for definite descriptions. The sentence "Kalki will ride a horse" is not meant to be about any old bearer of that name who happens to be the unique satisfier of all the specifications mentioned in the holy books of prophecy. Unlike Kalki, whichever child is the first to be born in the twenty-first century may be the reference of the artificial designator "Newperson 1". But Kalki is supposed to be *one precise* individual rather than just *precisely one* individual whoever it may be.[5] One way of looking upon our use of such names could be to *pretend* that we are already in the designated future time where Kalki has been already christened and we have been handed down his name from a relatively past usage. But that would be to talk *fictionally* about Kalki. In actual religious usage there is no such pretence or make-believe involved in a believer's utterance of the "singular" sentence, "Kalki will ride a white horse." While very sincerely playing game (1), believers wish to be able to express singular thoughts about Kalki before his advent. But it seems that any logic which does not paraphrase away its singular terms would not grant this wish.

There are roughly three major reasons for such a sanction against the future. First, we could not apply a causal theory of reference to such names without implying that a future occasion of ostensive dubbing of the object determines the name's present employment by backward causal links. However epistemologically undecidable, unavailable or irretrievably lost the past may be, we can always coherently assume that the present use of Socrates' name goes back to, or is causally determined by, the original use made in the presence of its bearer. The future, on the contrary, is not only unknown but, except for a determinist, metaphysically open. Even the determinist cannot insist that an actual item of our fixed future enters the genetic history of our *present* use of its name. That is why even if some of our predictions involving definite descriptions fitting future items come exactly true, we cannot argue that those predictions were *de re* about those very items. This was Prior's view, also corroborated by Geach in his dictum that you cannot have names *of* future items but only names kept ready *for* them.

Second and more recently, this view has been reinforced by the subtle distinction between names and rigid designators. All names are rigid designators, but all rigid designators are not names. My name picks me out at every possible world, even *at* worlds where my parents have not met and I do not exist. Once it *has been* used as a name of an object in the actual world, we are able to say from the perspective of the actual world that it is true *at* such I-less possible worlds that Arindam Chakrabarti does not exist *in* them. In order for this proposition to hold true at that possible world that name must designate me *at* it, though it cannot designate me *in* it, because I am not in it.[6] But such strict namehood pertains only to names which have been actually used for actualised individuals. "Newperson 1" has not been so used.[7] Even if we keep that rigid designator ready for the first-born of the next century and claim foreknowledge of the trivial truth that Newperson 1 will be the first to be born in the twenty-first century, we cannot claim to have known a truth *de re* about Newperson 1 – that precise individual. If we are around when such a child is an adult, we cannot go up to him or her and honestly claim: "Dear N. P-1, ten years before your birth I knew about *you* that you would be the first to be born in this century."

Commentators of Wittgenstein should be warned that alleged names of future individuals not only lack a referent but even, strictly speaking, lack a use (as a

name) now. Baker and Hacker have asked challengingly: "Why is it not possible to name a future individual? Does logic prevent it?" (p. 248).

If we accept Adam's (1989) account, then the answer should be "yes". Singular posthumous reference is possible because the dead leave their "thisnesses" (haecceities) behind. But antenatal reference can never manage to be singular because the "thisness" of an individual cannot precede the existence of that individual.[8] It would be overhasty to generalise from the case of naming the broken tool that an author's chosen name for an unwritten work has as much use *as a name* in the language-game of serious world talk as the names of expired entities. Thus, both "A will be born" and "A is dead" can be read as yielding "A does not $exist_N$". Yet, the fact of A's nonexistence which we can report before A's origination is not a fact about A, because as a state of affairs it does not include the very individual A or its "thisness" as a constituent. Once A has come into existence in 1954 we can go back imaginatively to 1900 and find A's singular nonexistence there. But from the currently available truth that A did not exist before 1954, it does not follow that it was true in 1900 *about A* that *he* would be born in 1954.[9]

Third even if future things are generally speaking as real as past things, most particular future things are resistible. Suppose that we are planning a big conference on metaphysics in the year 2000 A.D. (at a precise date and location). We have called it "BEING: 2000". If there were to be a conference which our name now picks out, then at the same time it cannot not be there. If "BEING: 2000" were a genuinely singular referring expression, then there is that specific conference which it picks out, but then that conference cannot not happen. But as we all know, however well planned and securely guaranteed, every such conference, even the one which will come about – can, as of now, not happen. Hence by *modus tollens* "BEING: 2000" is not a genuinely singular referring expression now.[10]

3.12 *Back to the Future*

David Kaplan has raised the question of naming the nonexistent once again[11] by taking future entities as examples of nonexistents. Instead of the stock example of the name of an unborn baby (about which, as Kaplan parenthetically remarks, "the metaphysical pronouncements from the Supreme Court impose all sorts of arbitrary constraints"), he now uses the example of the complete unassembled lectern kit from which following fully specific instructions for assembly, only one particular lectern can come into existence. Can't we dub that lectern now, before it has been put together, at least to record its pre-originatory absence (which Nyāya metaphysicians will recognise as an absence *located* in those lectern parts in the kit)? Can't we state exactly which lectern is yet to be assembled? Suppose we call that would-be lectern: "Tubee". Will "Tubee does not exist as yet" count as a genuine singular statement? Now, take the first two sorts of reasons for refusing to assign the status of a genuine *name* to a name-like expression. One of them has to do with the lack of specificity of the intended *namee*. Such was the trouble with the possible satisfiers of the fictional descriptions of a certain character. Since too many objects turn up with equal claim to fit the associated descriptions, the uniqueness-demanding proper name refuses *all* of

them. But in the case of some future objects, lack of specificity can hardly be a problem. Only one unique lectern can emerge from the parts if the instructions of assembly are accurately followed and if they do not leave any alternatives for the assembler at any step. But it will be remembered that the other reason for rejecting the claim of namehood was causal. According to the causal theory of singular reference the name has to be an *effect* of its referent. Now, however specific the future lectern might be it cannot cause a past use of the name "Tubee". If the actual history of that particular use of the name "Tubee" does not involve the lectern itself then – just by uniquely fitting the introductory description – the future lectern does not become a genuine "dubbee". Incidentally, this explanation also covers our failure to be able to use names for merely possible entities, which will in fact never come into existence. And this has to do with what I have called the resistibility of contingent future actuals. Suppose the lectern kit that we talked about earlier is never actually assembled and it gets burnt up. As a set of past objects we can still refer to those once-existent parts and specify (or even rigidly designate) the only possible lectern that would have emerged and once again try to name it "Tubee". "Tubee", in this case, will be a merely possible nonexistent. But, both for the above causal reasons, according to Kripke, and on account of the resistability argument, I shall not count "Tubee" as a genuine proper name. If before it was fully made, Lorenzo di Medici had pointed at the slab of marble which Michaelangelo was shaping into the *Pieta* and said: "This *Pieta* will attract millions of tourists and some vandals" – he would have been making a true prediction. But he would not have had *in mind* the *Pieta* which is now in the Vatican. So his statement would have to have been politely paraphrased as an existentially quantified one.

Still, we cannot quite consign the future lectern to the realm of fiction. "Tubee" may not be a name, but Tubee is not *unreal* in the same way as Sherlock Holmes's pipe. That is because no one actually plays a game of make-believe or shoots a fantasy film about "Tubee the lectern". Kaplan asks the searching question: even if we do not allow singular reference to future objects, shall we permit quantification to range over them? Quantifying over future entities surely will not be as revolting as quantifying over fictional or impossible objects But the consequence of that will be that within ordinary, actual world talk: "It would then be natural to add a *narrow existence predicate*" (Kaplan, 1989, p. 608) If this predicate is one which will be true of present particulars but false of wholly future and past values of variables, then it will coincide with my "$exists_N$".

I should, therefore, try to avoid such a gradation of existence within a certain language-game. *After* the lectern has been assembled we can legitimately dub it "Tubee" and can go back imaginatively to the past and say that Tubee did not exist at such and such a time or suppose that if the kit was burnt in the shop then Tubee would not have existed. That would be perfectly all right. But that should not be taken to entail that it was assertibly true in the past that this specific lectern, namely Tubee was absent. I do not share many of Prior's intuitions about these matters. But his wise warning at this particular point is worth keeping in mind: from the fact that I did not exist in 1905 it does not follow that the essentially indexical proposition or fact of *my* nonexistence subsisted then.

For the above sorts of reasons I think our game (1) talk about the future has to remain general and descriptive. I must hasten to add, however, that accessibility to singular reference in this austere sense is not at all a necessary condition of being an item of game (1). Being nameable by us now has little to do with being real. And singular reference with names is not the only sort of reference either. Through definite and indefinite descriptions, and even through rigid designators, we may be able to refer to the future. Millions of ants and electrons virtually indiscriminable and unnameable by us surely exist, have existed and will exist. Future actuals are as real as past and present ones. If we decide to take "exists$_R$" as a tenseless first-level predicate, then it will be true of all future actuals, whereas it will be false of purely imaginary and merely possible non-actual objects.

The only difficulty, and a fertile source of confusion, is that while we can singularly deny existence$_N$ about defunct past actuals and generally ascribe existence$_R$ to them we cannot *singularly* deny existence$_N$ about forthcoming objects. Unnameability is shared by both future actual individuals and merely possible non-actual ones. The bygones, on the other hand, are both actual and — if not totally forgotten — properly nameable.

All I can say about the relationship between the two existence-predicates which I began by distinguishing is this: *whatever exists$_N$ also must exist$_R$, but not vice versa.* But the logical mechanism for denying the current existence of an individual is not at all like that of denying its actuality or being. Currency ensures but does not exhaust reality. That is why we do not need to appeal to the structure of games or to any games-switch in order to understand singular reports of expiry or general reports of antenatal nonexistence.

The relation of reference between the name "J.F.K." and President John F. Kennedy, its bearer, is such that once it has been established, during the contemporaneity of the name and the bearer, it can go on holding trans-temporally between them even if one of them, namely the assassinated president drops out of (current) existence. Thus J.F.K. can be singularly referred to for ever after he dies. But what is that *property* his loss or lack of which can be reported posthumously yet singularly about him? That is the question we address in the next section.

3.2 FREGE, GEACH AND DUMMETT ON EXISTENCE$_N$

Frege was in fact the first modern philosopher to distinguish clearly the notion of existence *simpliciter* from the notion of actuality. Existence was supposed to be a second-level concept. But actuality is a *bona fide* first-level concept. Not all things which exist objectively are actual (*Wirklich*) in the sense of being able to produce or undergo change. In Frege's ontology, numbers, classes, senses of words, thoughts and value-ranges are all objective entities. Yet, since they have no direct causal role in the spatio-temporal world, they are not *actual* in the same way as tables, apples and people. The sentence "The number nought is not actual" is thus a straightforward singular sentence true of the abstract object zero. Is it the lack or loss of this property of actuality that singular death-sentences ascribe to their

named subjects? Geach had thought so. Existence$_N$, Geach thought, is nothing other than Frege's *actuality*. This might seem plausible because unlike denials of existence$_R$, denials of existence$_N$ are uncontroversially singular and first level. But does the individual who dies *lose* actuality? Would Frege look upon actuality as a losable property of individuals just because he considers it to be a property of individuals? Thought experiments suggest the contrary. Frege seems to divide his ontology roughly into the following three realms:

(a) The realm of actual objective things (e.g., live people, trees, physical events, etc.).
(b) The realm of actual subjective things (e.g., ideas, mental images, pains, etc.).
(c) The realm of nonactual objective things (e.g., numbers, value-ranges,thoughts).

If Geach is right then we have to interpret reports of cessations of existence as describing the journey of an item from the first (or second) to the third realm. But it seems absurd to suggest that Frege intended us to interpret reports of demise in this way. Just as by dying I shall cease to be alive but shall not cease to belong to the category of living beings (in the sense of animate objects); by ceasing to exist an actual object does not become an abstract object. Frege himself never equates "being actual" with "being currently alive". Rather his usage seems to favour the view that actuality, though a first-level property of only some objects, is an atemporal property which cannot be either earned or lost like any other categorical property, e.g. *being a physical object*. The riddle, what exactly is lost by an item when it goes out of existence, is, thus, not solved by the Fregean notion of actuality. Dummett is right in rejecting Geach's view that it is actuality which is in the present tense denied of the dead. But his ground for rejection seems to have been simply this: that "exists" in Geach's view would become equivocal between a quantifier and a first-level predicate. Even if the two senses of existence are distinguishable, Dummett thinks, they are closer to each other than properties of two different logical levels. This ground for rejection seems weak and inappropriate because the way of handling tensed existentials which Dummett himself suggests in the end also makes "... exists" ambiguous between " $(\exists x)$ $(\ldots = x)$" and "exists-at-t" (where t is replaced by specific designators of times and the entire predicate either does or does not apply atemporally to an object). The connection between *these* two predicates remains as mysterious as that between the existential quantifier and actuality. Moreover, neither of these senses quite captures the sense in which existence is what is *lost* by the perishing particular. Let us scrutinise Dummett's suggestion a little more deeply. Frege remarked in the *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*: "All determination of the place, the time and the like belong to the thought whose truth is in point, its truth itself is independent of place or time" (p. 17). Perhaps in keeping with this general Fregean strategy Dummett first recommends[12] that we insert the spatial or temporal limitations of properties (which apply to things only at some times and at some points in space) into the predicates themselves and thus make them a temporally or a spatially applicable or inapplicable. Thus, instead of the property of narrowness being true of a river at the source and being false of it at

the mouth, we could speak of the river having the property of *narrowness-at-the-source* all through it. Generalising this strategy in the temporal case, Dummett recommends that we talk of a lady possessing or lacking *beauty-at-the-age-of-25* rather than her possessing beauty *tout court*, at some age and losing it, or not possessing it at others. Now, in the case of ordinary ephemeral properties like obesity or shortsightedness which people can be meaningfully said to gain or lose, such a manoeuvre might seem uncalled for. But in the case of existence we see its point. It makes no sense to say about existence (even in the sense of existence$_N$) that something (e.g. a road, or an empire, or a person) can *be* there waiting to earn it or lingering after losing it. For an actual object, to be is to be located and present in some time. Hence the urgency of replacing the phoney temporal version of existence with the atemporal property of *existence-at-time-t*.

One could object here that if Cleopatra is not around now to lack the property of existence *simpliciter*, she is no more available to bear her eternalised property of not-existing-in-1990. But Dummett has an obvious answer: the question "Does Cleopatra have this *atemporal* property *now*?" is incoherent. Banbury Road (in the city of Oxford) ends at the War Memorial. It simply does not exist after that. Its possession of the "despatialised" property of *not-existing-beyond-the-War-Memorial* is not like its possession of the property of being bumpy, which it has here but lacks there or, maybe, lacks everywhere. It makes no sense to ask about Banbury Road, standing at a particular point in the city (where the road does or does not exist), whether at that point the road has the property of *not-existing-beyond-the-War-Memorial*. Similarly, if we build the time reference into the context of the predicate, its application to or being true of objects becomes automatically exempt from temporal relativisation. Existence at particular times, thus, becomes a "timelessly lackable" first-level property but not one which can be lost. Dummett does not directly answer our initial question: what is lost by an entity when it goes out of existence? Maybe he shows us that the question was logically ill-framed to start with. Yet a nagging discomfort seems to remain about the spatial comparison with roads. Roads persist at a distance after coming to an end. I can stand at a spot where the road has not yet begun or where it no longer continues and say truly about it that there exists that road over there which at this moment has the property of not-existing-*here*. But it appears that we cannot coherently comment about a dead person (much less about an unbuilt bridge) that there *exists* this individual who (or which) at this moment bears the property of not-existing-*now*. This could be due simply to our confusion between the tenseless "exists" and the present-tense "exists". Perhaps there is something to the intuition that existence is existence now.[13] This intuition has been developed sometimes into the fully-fledged doctrine of *presentism*. Now, if presentism consists in collapsing existence$_R$ with existence$_N$, then I reject it. Yet I cannot overcome the feeling that lack of nowness is a kind of *nonexistence*, while lack of hereness is mere local *absence*. Ends of roads limit their expanse but do not strip them of existence. When the road finishes, it does not perish. But temporally, when the life of a watch or an animal terminates, the individual ceases to be around, though it still continues as a past member of the actual world. Moreover, the closer link which Dummett demanded to be shown

between the quantifier sense of existence and the sense in which existence is a sheddable property eludes us even after we have taken his advice and constructed first-level predicates like "exists-at-t_n". For one thing, existing at a particular point of time is not a property which can be lost, let alone earned. Also, its connection with existence *simpliciter* remains as murky as ever. If, for all values of "n", something fails to exist-at-t_n, can we say about such a thing that there exists such a thing? Can we truly say with "t" ranging over times: $(\exists x)$ $(\forall t)$ (x does not exist at t)? Take the possible individual who would have been born if a certain sperm and a particular ovum which actually did not unite did get together to form a zygote. Call it "Nohuman". Nohuman never existed and never will. But does he satisfy the tenseless universal first-level predicate "$(\exists x)$ $(x = \ldots)$"? I think not.

These problems — which Dummett's suggestion leaves unsolved — would not arise if we could make do with just one notion of existence, either the one captured by the existential quantifier or the one captured by "... exists at t", a first-level predicate. The test for such unitary accounts of existence will be whether any of them can suffice to show how we make singular reports of cessation intelligible to ourselves.

3.3 REPORTING ANNIHILATION IN THE PREDICATE-CALCULUS

Can we just stick to the existential quantifier and record the fact that a single thing, say a particular hydrogen atom, existed at an earlier time t_1 but went out of existence at t_2? Bennett[14] has tried to show us that we cannot. Of course the sentence "$(\exists x)$ (Hx at t_1 and ~ Hx at t_2)" will not do. That would amount to stating that a certain item ceased to be a hydrogen atom (or a human being). We need something stronger. If *being located* (symbolised by "L ...") is a property that an H-atom cannot lose without ceasing to exist, then we can report such annihilation of a certain H-atom at time t_2 by the following sentence (call it "C_1"):

$$(\exists x)\ (\mathrm{H}x \text{ at } t_1 \text{ and } \mathrm{L}x \text{ at } t_1 \text{ and } \sim \mathrm{L}x \text{ at } t_2)\ \ldots\ [C_1].$$

Apart from the oddity that something's being an H-atom at all is relativised to a time in "Hx *at* t_1" (as if the same thing could be now an H-atom and then something else!), the above sentence would capture the intended message only when conjoined with the specification that to lose location is to lose existence, or, in other words, locatedness is unlosable. To say this, we have to add to C_1 the clause

$$\text{"}(\forall x)\ [(\exists t)(\mathrm{H}x \text{ at t and } \mathrm{L}x \text{ at t}) \rightarrow (\forall t)\ (\mathrm{L}x \text{ at t})\ \ldots\ [C_2]$$

which says that every H-atom which is once located at some time is located at every time. But C_2 and C_1 cannot be conjoined without contradiction. The way out, of course, is to tone down C_2 such that it does *not* say that every H-atom which is located at all is located at all times, but only that every H-atom which is located at all, is located at all times at which that H-atom exists. If annihilations are to be regarded as *losses* by an object of properties which cannot be lost, they will naturally become impossible to report coherently. To make passing away intelligible then we have to add a proviso to "unlosable", modifying it as "the property which is such that it cannot be lost *without the item ceasing to exist*". But to define cessation of

existence in terms of an item's loss of such a modified unlosable property will be openly circular. Does bringing in identity help in any way? If instead of the general message that some item of a particular sort went out of existence, we want to *name* a dead person or a pulled-down building, or a defunct institution in order to go on to report its demise we seem to need the identity-predicate. Thus we could try to report the death of Mr N.N. as follows:

$$(\exists x)\ (x = \text{Mr N.N. at } t_1) \text{ and } (\forall x)\ (x \neq \text{Mr N.N. at } t_2) \ldots [C_3)].$$

But how are we to understand these identity-predicates which are relativised to times? Our pre-theoretical understanding of identity is such that it is absurd to say that "a" equals "b" for only a certain period of time, especially when "a" and "b" are both names rather than descriptions like "John's wife". Moreover, if we take the name "Mr N.N." occurring in C_3 seriously, then we should be able to perform existential generalisation over it. The second conjuct of C_3 will then yield the apparent absurdity that there exists something such that nothing is identical with it at t_2. Whether we try to say it in terms of an unlosable sortal property which has been lost or in terms of identity with a certain individual with which nothing is now identical, we seem to get entangled with some inconsistency, circularity or repugnant logical consequences when we rewrite singular death-sentences in the language of quantification theory. Perhaps we could just use sentential tense-logical operators prefixed to the quantified conjuncts instead of trying to relativise the identity predicates to times. We shall then come up with:

It was the case at t_1 that $(\exists x)\ (x = \text{Mr N.N.})$ and it is now the case at t_2 that $(\forall x)\ (x \neq \text{Mr N.N.}) \ldots [C_4]$.

The problem with C_4 will be this: either we have to take "... = Mr N.N." as an unanalysable monadic predicate where "Mr N.N." occurs not as a stand-alone name but as an orthographic accident[15] or, we have somehow to show that the name retains its identify of reference across the two contexts. To show this is to allow an existential quantification over both its occurrences. There must exist some identical individual about whom both the past-tense existential sentence and the present-tense universal sentence are true. But in what sense does an individual still *exist* such that no individual is now identical with it?

The mist only gets thicker if we try to make our *quantifier* explicitly tense sensitive like other first-level predicates. Michael Woods (1976) tries to do this by introducing a place for time in the (Tarskian) satisfaction predicate which has to be used to give the truth condition for a quantified sentence. Woods's account turns on a classification of predicates into three types. Type-1 predicates are what we have been calling *unlosable*. All natural sortal predicates like "... is an animal", "... is a human being". "... is a material object" will count as Type-1. Type-2 predicates apply to objects only at certain times and may not be true of the same objects at others. They are *losable* predicates like "... is asleep", "... is beautiful", "... is running", etc. Type-3 predicates can be true of objects even when they no longer exist. They are, roughly, *intentional* predicates like "... is forgotten", "... has become a grandfather", "... is eulogised", etc. Once we have distinguished

Type-1 predicates from other sorts, we define (and eliminate) the tensed version of existence — our existence$_N$ — as follows, using second-order quantification over predicates:

$$\ldots\ exists_N\ at\ t = df\ (\lambda x)\ (\exists f)\ (fx\ at\ t) \text{ (when "f" is a Type-1 predicate).}$$

Existence$_N$ is a temporal actualisation of a property-bearing capacity. Loss of existence is then supposed to be understood in terms of loss of the property connoted by such a Type-1 predicate. Two objections can be levelled immediately against Woods's Strategy. First, it is logically awkward to add a place for time in the specification of an unlosable predicate. If "fx" stands for a Type-1 predicate, what does it mean to say that A satisfies "fx" *only at t*? If *ex hypothesi*, *x* could never be not-f if it is f at any time, what can it possibly mean to assert that fx *at t*? Second, the characterization of a Type-1 predicate itself involves reference to a notion of temporal existence which has not been analysed: "predicate(s) true, if at all, of an object throughout the existence, *but only while it exists*" (Woods (1976) p. 256, emphasis mine).

Woods starts with the ambition of not assuming any primitive (first-level) sense of existence except the Fregean quantifier sense. But he ends with the concession that once Type-1 predicates are represented as monadic, "there is no good reason for not treating 'exists' as itself a Type-1 predicate" (ibid., p. 262).

The crux of the problem seems to be this: either a property is just as unlosable as existence, in which case it gets equally entangled in the puzzle concerning a singular denial of it being at present true of an item, or it can be lost notwithstanding the survival of the identical subject and hence is inadequate to replace the tense-sensitive first-level version of existence, *salva veritate*.

3.4 A FREGEAN PARAPHRASE OF "ARKLE NO LONGER EXISTS"?

To say that Arkle, the horse, has died is hardly to say that Arkle has ceased to be Arkle, or that Arkle is no longer a horse, or that Arkle *is* but is not any longer actual or located in space. What *is* it then to say that Arkle no longer exists? Because Arkle was an animal, her physical history essentially involved continuous movements of an organically identical body across time. If Arkle died at a certain place some time ago, then we could paraphrase our report of the singular fact that Arkle no longer exists as follows:

For some L, for some n, it was the case n time units ago that Arkle occupied L and now it is not the case that for some x, x has reached the place where it is now by a continuous route over n time units from L, and x is an animal. (where "L" takes the name of the precisely defined place occupied by an object at a time as its substituens).[16]

Notice that Arkle's *name* only occurs in the part which is prefixed by the past-tense operator and does not reoccur under "now". There is no present-tense predication made singularly about Arkle. Notice also the total avoidance of identity-predicates. Of course, Arkle's carcass could be still there and it might have reached its current

location by continuous movement from where the living Arkle breathed her last. But a carcass is not an animal. (Aristotle would say that it is called a "dead *horse*" only by courtesy.) Hence the need for the last clause "and x is an animal". The magic of this device is that it eschews both a first-level existence-predicate (in its tensed or tenseless sense) and also any ascription of a replacement predicate which stands for an unlosable property.

A counter example to that clever analysis can however be easily thought up. If Arkle gave birth to a baby just as she died, that colt can now have reached the place where it is by continuous movements from L where it was (and Arkle was) n time units ago and yet it is an animal as well. This will make the paraphrase false while the sentence "Arkle no longer exists" will remain true. But that is only a minor worry. The major problem with this account, as Williams himself recognises, is that it is not general enough. It holds for animals but would be no good for other kinds of objects which also cease to exist such as institutions, tables, conferences, wars, etc. Such objects might either not move at all or move along locations discontinuously; e.g. the table can be dismantled and reassembled elsewhere. We must find an account of cessation which can be used across the board irrespective of the criterion of identity for the sort of object which is said to cease to be. In order to do this, Williams first formulates the concept of a pair of predicates which he calls "n-A-re-identifiable predicables". To have a strict criterion of identity for things of the sort A, we must know that *there are some predicables ø and ψ such that for every x and for every y, necessarily, if it has been the case n time-units ago that øx and it is now the case that ψy, x is the same A as y.* The motivation behind re-identifying an object as the same something as another with the help of *two* distinct properties is clear. The problems which arose out of affirming an unlosable property with reference to a past time and then denying that anything, or at least that particular thing now, does not have *that property* would not arise upon this reconstruction. If for every sortal A and a property ø which holds at one time of a particular sample of A, we can find *another* property ψ which holds uniquely of an object *just in case* that object is the very same A as the one which earlier had ψ, matters do become smoother. We can now try to capture the past existence of an A-type entity by means of its possession of a property ø and negate its present existence by means of not bearing ψ, without any incoherence or any attempt at posthumous predication. In every case where we talk about something not existing any longer, we might not actually find such *n-A-re-identifiable* pairs of predicables. Yet it looks as if we could at least conceive of a logically coherent way of encoding the message that N no longer exists (when "N" is a *bona fide* proper name) without running into two senses of existence or having to predicate possession or destitution of a property to a perished particular in the present tense. The formula will involve second-order quantification over properties, and because n-A-re-identifiable properties will be extremely hard to obtain for every sort (A-s) of object, it will be difficult to apply to concrete cases. Nevertheless here is the final formulation of the message that the individual N (which belonged to the category or kind A and was extant n time-units ago) does not exist now.

(∃ø) $(\exists\psi)$ (∃n) [(∀x) (∀y)[Necessarily {(n-ago it was the case that øx → (now it is the case that $\psi y \rightarrow x$ is the same A as y))} and N was ø n-ago and ~ (∃z) (ψz now)][17] (call this schema w)

However astute all that might seem, does such careful rewriting of a death-sentence really solve our original problem regarding posthumous reference, posthumous predication and the logical relationship between existence_R and existence_N? Does it, for example, tell us what is lost by an item when it ceases to exist? Frankly, the answer is: no. Yet, one virtue of the above account is that although it does construe "Ayer no longer exists" as news about *Ayer* (in so far as the proper name "Ayer" would occur in the past-tense conjunct (N *was* ø n-ago) inside the suggested reformulation of "Ayer is no more" according to schema w), it does not ascribe any property to him in the present tense (now that he is not here to bear any genuine properties). Upon the above account, to announce Ayer's expiry is to say that of two properties of re-identification one belonged to Ayer when he was alive and the other (which would have belonged to him had he continued to live now) now belongs to no one. This, Williams claims, "escapes unscathed from the entanglements of Plato's Beard" (1981, p. 151). The sentence "Ayer no longer exists" seemed to involve us in form of "Plato's Beard" – to recall Quine's use of that nickname of the ancient riddle of non-being[18] – because whatever tense operator might be prefixed to the context, the genuine use of a proper name always demands that we are able existentially to generalise out of that context and deduce that *there exists someone who does not now exist.* Schema w clearly eschews any present-tense predication about N the individual who is no longer there. But it correctly displays the death news to be singularly *about* N. What it does not do is spell out what property it is that N used to have and *N now lacks*. This could well be a merit of the account rather than a shortcoming. I suspect that death does not, logically speaking, amount to any loss of a property by the dying individual. "Exists-now" is a token-reflexive expression. It stands for distinct first-level properties of being present or current at distinct times of its usé.

Our journey, so far, through the jungle of possible readings of this inconsistent-sounding implication of innocent death-sentences has taught us the following. First, the quantifier sense of "(there) exists" has to be reserved for both currently extant and once extant but now defunct items of game (1). Since some real, concrete and actual objects and people are extinct or dead now, we must disabuse ourselves of the illusion that "There exists an x such that x has perished" involves any incoherence or paradox. The "There exists an x"- reading of a quantifier must *not* be taken in the present-tense sense, because we must remember that it is a variant of "For some object x", and we must be able to say in a wholly matter of fact fashion that some objects are not around now (unless we want to look upon all past history as fiction). Moreover, since the name of an actual object does not become *empty* when the bearer ceases to exists, even in reports of such cessations, the name *can* give way to an existentially bound variable without any inconsistency. Second, there is nothing in our reports of demise which is parallel to what I have called a master-game move of naming an object in one type of discourse and denying its

availability in another. We very much confine ourselves to the real world when we talk about the dead. Death may not be an event *in* the dead person's life, but it is surely an event in the very same world where the dead person lived, received a name and is posthumously available for reference by that name. If only statements involving game switching are negative existentials, then reports of extinction or expiry are not a variety of negative existentials. Third, there is no direct answer to the question: what property has Ayer come to *lose* by passing away? He could be said to have lost contemporaneity or the elusively indexical property of being situated as a functioning individual at the same time as the time when *this* reference to him is being made. But this is a property which he never *had*. So he could not have lost it. "No longer existing" is therefore only a phoney expression for the lack of a property. Whatever that elusive property of *still-existing* might be, it is not definable in terms of the same timeless existence which is captured by either the "$\exists$" of the quantifier or by the universal first-level predicate "$(\exists x)\ (x = \ldots)$". Our use of the word "existence" for both the elusive indexial property which *some* items of game (1) now lack *and* for the property which *all* items of game (1) — dead or alive, intact or broken, sadly missed or eagerly awaited — timelessly possess is indeed equivocal. The dead have as much Fregean actuality and minimal existence$_R$ as the living. Future individuals, I am inclined to think, can also be tenselessly actual although as long as they lie wholly in the future we cannot *name* them properly. But that does not mean that our attempted reference to them should be understood at a fictional level of discourse. They are unlike fictional objects, which would never be real, because future individuals will at some time actually be around and current. But in another sense not-yet-existent entities are less of individuals than purely fictional items (unless they are fictional future items). There is a game of pretence (our game (2)) within which our predicative statements about fictional items can be taken as *singular*. But there is no special game for speaking *de re* about the unborn. We can only speak generally of whoever or whichever item might come to satisfy our present description. About such forthcoming individuals even reports of current nonexistence cannot claim to be genuinely singular. Of course to be able to cohabit the universe with us at this present time is not to perform a special feat of existing. (That is why presentism is a form of ontological chauvinism.) When we record an individual's failure to do so, we are not issuing a negative existential at all. By saying this I might not have solved the entire mystery of singular reports of cessation, but, I hope I have at least shown that attempts to construe such reports as some sort of denial of some sort of existence are sure to prove futile.

One of the most ordinary uses of a referring expression like a name is to enable us to speak about *absent* (which includes dead) items of game (1). A more intriguing use of names is in games of make-believe where we appear to pick out items like Sherlock Holmes which are *not even absent* but are simply not available for reference in game (1). It is this sort of language-game of make-believe that we discuss in the next chapter.

NOTES

1 "First of all, you must not confuse being dead with not being, a condition that occupies the vast expanse of time before birth ..." Italo Calvino (*Mr Palomar* p. 108).
2 See Peter Winch, "Ceasing to Exist" in *Trying to Make Sense* (1987) pp. 81–106.
3 See Yourgrau, "The Dead" (1987) p. 89.
4 "If the projected house is built, the plan for the building is carried into effect and so is successful; but the reference made by the happy couple who said 'Our house has four bedrooms' is not made any more successful by the completion of the house" – A.M. Honoré Philosophy (1969). Honoré argues that the reference was *already* successful before the house was built. So it could not be *more* successful. I disagree.
5 See Barry Miller, "Exists and Existence" in *Review of Metaphysics*, December 1986, p. 241, on two kinds of uniqueness.
6 See "Time and Thisness" by R.M Adams in *Themes from Kaplan* (1989).
7 With such a futuristic "singular" term, Donnellan says "we are in the somewhat odd position of possessing a mechanism for introducing a name that rigidly designates something, but a mechanism that is not powerful enough to allow us to use the name!" (*Midwest Studies* (2), 1977 p. 20).
8 Thus Bob Adams argues clearly: "My thisness, and singular propositions about me, cannot have pre-existed me because if they had, it would have been possible for them to have existed even if I had never existed, and that is not possible" (*Time of Thisness*, ibid).
9 See G.E.M. Anscombe's presidential address "Existence and Truth" in *Proceedings of Aristotlean Society*. Vol. 1987–88, p. 10 for a discussion of related problems and similar views.
10 I owe the idea of this argument to Dr. Jerry Valberg.
11 See "Afterthoughts" in *Themes From Kaplan* (Oxford, 1989) pp. 607–10.
12 Dummett (1981) p. 387.
13 See Routley (1980) p. 361.
14 See his *Kant's Dialectic* (Cambridge, 1974) pp. 63–4.
15 This will amount to the view which Prior finds implausible and ridicules as follows "... there is only a single genuine individual (the Universe) – which gets John-Smithish or Mary-Brownish in such and such regions for such and such periods" (*Past, Present and Future* (1967) p. 174).
16 See C.J.F. Williams (1981) pp. 139–40.
17 See Williams (1981) p. 141.
18 "Nonbeing must in some sense be, otherwise what is it that there is not? This tangled doctrine might be nicknamed *Plato's Beard*; historically it has proved tough, frequently dulling the edge of Occam's razor" (*From a Logical Point of View*, p. 2).

CHAPTER 4
AN ENQUIRY INTO THE MEANING AND TRUTH OF FICTIONAL DISCOURSE

...as I say, sir, that which is a game of art for you is our sole reality.

Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Act III

4.01 A TAXONOMY OF FICTION-RELATED UTTERANCES

Our day-to-day talk about the world becomes meaningful by aiming at being true, by making singular reference to past and present particulars and by presupposing that each item talked about is such that it either bears a certain property or its complement. Fictional discourse, whether original or derivative, does not seem to aim at plain truth and, on the face of it, makes singular reference to items like Pegasus which are not real at any time, not even in any possible world. And Sherlock Holmes is notoriously neutral between having or lacking a mole on his back. Yet talk about Pegasus, Sherlock Holmes or Mr Pickwick is not gibberish. It is even evaluated for correctness.[1] How is this possible? To answer this question is to flesh out my idea of game (2). In this chapter, I shall discuss the questions of meaning, illocutionary force, and truth-value of different types of fictional talk. Related questions about the reference of names like "Desdemona", the ontological status of characters of fiction, correct analysis of reports of real readers' emotional reactions to unreal fictional objects, and about the alleged indeterminacy of fictional items will be taken up in the next chapter.

For facility of discussion, I have constructed the following preliminary table of the various kinds of statements involving use of fictional names and descriptions. Labels like "F1" and "F5" should also lead to brevity. I do not claim that all possible types of such utterances have been taken into account, nor will the justification for each distinction be evident at this stage. Some of these distinctions, e.g. between F1 and F2, will be familiar;[2] others are less common or even controversial. The subsequent sections will generally presuppose these distinctions and also, where needed, defend them.

TYPES OF CONTEXTS FOR FICTIONAL NAMES

Story-telling or Fictive

F1 (existential or predicative) – Author's utterances, sentences in the text of the fiction.

A. Chakrabarti, *Denying Existence*, 81–109.

F1.1	–	Stage-setting lines giving description of items (roughly fixing their essences).
F1.2	–	Story-developing lines making references to already introduced items.
Story Retelling or Fictional		
F2	–	Reader's utterances claiming to correspond to or follow from the author's say-so.
F2.1	–	Description of people and things, etc., or recounting the plot of the story which sticks to the letter of the text with lexically equivalent rephrasing.
F2.2	–	Inferential statements about the events of the story, although the author did not explicitly mention them.
F2.2.1	–	Conclusions drawn wholly from fictional premises.
F2.2.2	–	Conclusions drawn from partly extrapolated nonfictional premises incorporated from the actual world.
Existence Assessment		
F3	–	Straightforward singular (negative or affirmative) existentials about fictional objects from an actual-world standpoint.
Character Talk		
F4	–	Talk of "creatures of fiction" outside the fiction, typically in the context of literary criticism.
Attributive Use		
F5	–	Oblique references, often merely adjectival, to fictional items in talking about real people: e.g. "Chaplin was quite a Don Juan."
Emotional Reactions of Real People to Fictional Items		
F6	–	Statements involving simultaneous reference to real people and fictional items recording the real psychological attitudes of the former to the latter.

For fictive discourse with even the minimum degree of structural complexity, separation of the stage-setting (F1.1) part may become practically impossible. Not only do we not expect the beginning (or any particular part) of the novel or story to give us the inflexible core of the narrative or the "criterial" details about the fictional items, we often wait until the end of the story to explore the "real" identity of the items or the "real" story-line. Yet the distinction is a valid one. *Some* fictional statements involve explicit backward/forward reference to items already introduced; and not all fictive utterances are meant to be taken as equally determining the essential features of the fictional items.

Both F3 and F4 are spoken of in the literature as *outside* remarks. But, surely the sense in which we deny the existence of the *character* of Sherlock Holmes in Elizabethan literature is not the sense in which we deny the existence of Sherlock Holmes in the real world. Character talk may be immediately unrecognisable because of the picturesque use of words suitable for inside-the-fiction descriptions: e.g. "Conan Doyle first killed off Holmes but then brought him back to life." The easiest way to find out that this is not F2-type talk is to notice that it is not intended to be true *in* the Holmes' stories. Clearer examples of F4 would be remarks like "Falstaff has a long history in comic drama" where we are explicitly talking of Falstaff as a literary object or motif. Such outside talk of characters displays its typical independence from the internal fictional framework when we freely discuss characters from two or more different novels or plays written about (in a typically fictional-historical sense of "about") different times and milieus. Statements like "Hamlet's agonies are much more subdued than Oedipus's" place us at a point of view which is as external to *Hamlet* as to *Oedipus Rex.* We popularly call it a statement about fictional objects because both are fictional, but we must not forget that the world created by Shakespeare is as foreign to that created by Sophocles as both are to the actual world.

Interesting interweaving, recursion and even partial break-down of the above distinctions are also fairly common. If, in making F2 statements inside *The Man with the Twisted Lip,*[3] we say about Hugh Boone, the suspected murderer of Mr Neville St. Clair, that he does not exist, we shall be indulging in F3 inside F2. Apart from such doubly fictional statements, we can easily come across fictional people making serious assertions about contemporary real events and people. Many revolutionary opinions have been thus expressed. Sherlock Holmes can appraise a fictional character (e.g. from Shakespeare's plays) from the outside point of view (F4 inside F2). There are stories where the fictional persons talk about their creator making true statements about him (e.g. R.L. Stevenson, *Men of the Tale*, an appendix to *Treasure Island*). Even while writing fiction, an author might suddenly take a non-fictional stance and address the reader directly to report facts or moralise about them. Such serious reflection may be woven fairly unnoticeably into his fictional yarn. Some fictions again, like *The Tempest*, reveal the fictional nature of some of their own characters: "These our actors;/As I foretold you, were all spirits, and/Are melted into air, into thin air," announces Prospero. We can be puzzled by some fictional characters lamenting their own actual nonexistence (for instance, in the Stevenson story). Diderot's eighteenth-century masterpiece, *Jacques the Fatalist*, deliberately and recurrently breaks away from all the rules of the usual fictional game — mixing up straight dialogue with the reader, pretence of plain reportage, perverse toying with a multiple choice of alternative turns of events, with the meandering main storyline consisting of many half-finished tales told by the fictional people themselves. Our distinctions would be hard to apply clearly to such

tricky narrative structures. Creativity appears to consist precisely in flouting every such general rule as we can formulate on the basis of hitherto-existing styles of story construction.

F5 statements are not strictly statements about fictional items. When someone says, "How can I tell who stole your purse? I am not Sherlock Holmes!", the reference to the detective is not fictional but figurative. Such statements are, therefore, better classified as using actual or fictional names as descriptions (as in describing an intelligent child in terms of "He is a little Einstein"). Nelson Goodman tends to take such attributive use of fictional names as paradigmatic and reaches the wrong conclusion that such names only apply metaphorically to actual objects.[4] In Section 4.11 below we shall consider and reject the metaphorical account of fictional discourse which might be instigated by focusing unduly on F5-type statements.

Finally, we must be careful to distinguish F6 statements from statements recording our admiration, etc. for the *characters* as pieces of artwork. To say about a fictional person "He is such a perfect villain", as an F6 statement, may be paying a tribute to the portrayal of the character. If we decide to construe the first adverbial qualification as applying (in real life) to the *literary abstract object* and the second adjective as applying (in fiction) to the *fictional item*, then we could safely say that there have been *interestingly boring* characters as well as *boringly interesting* characters in fictional literature.

4.02 *Varieties of Philosophical Questions*

There are a number of major philosophical problems relating to fiction. Some of the issues belong to pragmatics, e.g. whether fictional or, at least, fictive discourse involves illocutionary acts of a completely different order than those performed in describing the actual world or whether all fictional speech acts can be explained in terms of pretending. Some others belong to ontology: e.g. are fictional entities abstract, merely possible, intentional or extensional but nonexistent objects? Is the "horsehood" of Pegasus distinct as a property from that of Bucephalus? Some belong to philosophical logic: e.g. do we drop the existential presupposition when we indulge in F1 or F2, or do we retain it under a prefixed caveat? Yet others belong to semantics: e.g. what renders fictional statements true or false? If "Sherlock Holmes" is not referential in the author's fictive talk, how can it gain reference in the reader's fictional talk?

Some of the issues will concern some particular types of fiction-talk rather than others. Yet, it is neither possible nor advisable to discuss these issues completely independently of one another. Often we have to focus on more than a single problem at the same time, especially because a particular suggestion made by a philosopher may resolve one issue or one group of issues only at the cost of making some other problem more acute. On the contrary, some solution which was addressed solely to a certain specific issue might be found to have illuminating implications for some other.

Space does not permit me to deal with questions such as: what kind of logic do we need to validate inferences in fictional contexts? Do we need a free logic? Should we relax the law of contradiction to allow impossible fictions? But I do end up discussing neighbouring issues.

4.11 THE QUESTION OF MEANING AND ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS

According to the primitive "Fido"–Fido theory of meaning it is not possible for us to mean anything by the use of a name which we know at the time of use to be without a real bearer. Russell and early Wittgenstein believed in a sophisticated version of this object-theory of meaning. If "N" is a name, then the object N *is* its only meaning. Hence, if N does not exist, "N" is either a senseless symbol or, at any rate, not a name but an incomplete expression which has no meaning in isolation. So, according to Russell, there are just two alternative ways of reacting to the fact that we do *understand*: "Oliver Twist asked for second helping of the orphanage gruel".

(a) We could not be using and taking "Oliver Twist" as a proper name; we treat it only as a proxy for an incomplete (hence, lacking meaning on its own) expression like: "There existed one and only one boy called 'Oliver Twist' who...".
(b) The name "Oliver Twist" does refer to an object of some sort, a subsistent shadow entity which does not exist but has some wraith of being about it.

The first way Russell adopted himself, while the second he happily (and erroneously) attributed to Meinong. As a consequence of taking the first option, Russell had to say that all fictional and fictive statements alike were understood as false existence claims. Such a view has long since become obsolete. Its last supporter – Ryle (1933) – was reprimanded by Moore in the following memorable words: "Mr Ryle implies something monstrously false about our proposition when he implies that part of what Dickens says is that only one man was ever called 'Pickwick'" (1933) p. 60.

The good old doctrine of existential import of all singular subject expressions has subsequently made its appearance again in the guise of the somewhat less banal doctrine of existential *presupposition* of any referring use of names. Whereas Russell considered the bearer of the name to be itself a constituent of the proposition expressed by the sentence where the name primarily occurs, Strawson favoured the presupposition theory, according to which I fail to make any statement if the referring expressions do not designate some existent object or other. Such aborted reference results in neither true nor false sentences such as "All John's children are asleep" (when John is childless). To fictive (F1) sentences, as we shall later see, such a truth-valuelessness may still be ascribed with some plausibility. But what about our fictional (F2) statements: e.g. "Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street" (and Strawson would be wrong to insist that they are no statements at all) which are considered "bet-sensitively" true or false?[5] Instead of the misconstrued Meinongian thesis that fictional names refer to *subsistent* objects, some followers of Strawson accounted for the meaningfulness of such truth-claiming fictional statements with the theory that "Macbeth" in "Macbeth was weak-willed" refers to an entity which *exists in fiction*. Thus, Searle remarks:

The existence axiom holds across the board: in real world talk one can refer only to what exists; in fictional talk one can refer to what exists in fiction (plus such real world things and events as the fictional story incorporates).

Searle (1969) pp. 78–79)

Generally right-minded though these remarks might sound, they surely make use of a risky notion of existence-in-fiction against which both the genuine Meinongian (who believed that fictional objects have *no being at all* – that the so-called "existence axiom" should be overthrown) and the Russellian robust sense of reality urge us to be cagey. Leaving the issues of reference and existence for subsequent sections, let us now proceed to see how Searle develops his basic position regarding the *meaning* of fictional discourse.

If we think of the meaning conventions of linguistic elements as being (at least in part) vertical conventions, tying sentences to the world, then it is best to think of the tacit conventions of fictional discourse as being lateral or horizontal conventions, lifting, as it were, the discourse away from the world. But it is essential to realise that even in "Little Red Riding Hood" "red" means red. The conventions of fiction don't change the meaning of words or other linguistic elements.

Searle (1969) p. 79

Before elaborating and commenting upon Searle's later development of the above line of thought, let us remind ourselves how Frege came to recognise that, in his own technical sense of the term, *senses* of sentences and names remain the same whether or not the names have any reference. Frege's opinions concerning how the existence of the referent affects the sense of a word evolved through three stages. Leaving behind his initial doctrine that terms without reference are senseless, he held in a middle period that fictional statements, though truth-valueless, express mock-thoughts. But, "The logician does not have to bother with mock-thoughts just as a physicist who sets out to investigate thunder will not pay any attention to stage-thunder" (Frege, 1979, p. 130).

The germ of a pretence account is already there! He eventually comes to recognise that the object designated by a proper name is "quite inessential to the thought content of a sentence which contains it". It seems that Searle was giving voice to similar intuitions when he maintained that the meanings of words do not change as we move from world-talk to fiction-talk, from using names borne by actual flesh-and-blood individuals to employing designations without such references. Only here, Searle seemed to extend Frege's intermediate view to cover the notion of reference as well; he would not term fictive names quite devoid of reference; he would give them a mock reference and their bearers a corresponding mock existence.[6]

Before discussing Searle's thesis in detail let us quickly dispose of another popular explanation of how fictional language comes to have any meaning.

Shall we construe the fictive along the same lines as the poetic? I.A. Richards's view of fiction as involving an evocative or expressive use of language seems to spring from noticing the negative characteristic of fictional discourse, namely that it is not meant seriously and literally. True, in telling a fairy tale we are not *claiming* that there was a fire-breathing dragon somewhere, but it is not particularly illuminating to think that we are just exclaiming something. Fictive statements do sometimes move us to tears or frighten us and, in general, have emotional effects on the audience like those of figurative speech. But that does not make the interjectional account of fictional language plausible because some reports of facts provoke the same response. As Margaret Macdonald (1954) aptly points out:

(a) No one could tell the story of Emma in a series of smiles, sighs, tears, shouts or the limited vocabulary which represents such emotive expressions.
(b) Whose emotions would they express? The author's? The audience's? The real sentiments felt by the unreal characters?
(c) Intended emotional effect is as inessential to the meaning of fictional discourse as it is to that of ordinary reports of fact which are seldom *plainly* stated.

An emotive theory of fiction is easier to reject than the confusing parallel between metaphorical and fictional statements. Walton tries to make the distinction between the figurative and the fictional clearer.[7] In a sense neither the statement "There lives a beast inside every human heart, however cultured or civilised" (M) nor the statement "There lived a werewolf right in the middle of London in 1807" (F) are to be taken "literally". Apparently both are understood as true by virtue of another literal truth. In the case of the first sentence, the "basis (literal) statement" would be "Every human being is capable of beastly acts" (M_b). In the case of the second, it would be: "According to a certain film, story or legend, there was a werewolf ... in 1807 ... (F_b).

Walton draws our attention to the following fundamental "disanalogies".

(a) M_b says the same thing as M, but F_b does not say the same thing as F. For instance, F is true in the relevant fiction, but F_b is not.
(b) In a game of make-believe where pieces of silver paper are proxies for jewels, the statement inside the game, e.g. "John has stolen five diamonds from Queen Liza" may be true because it is actually the case that John has snatched away five bits of paper from Elizabeth's hands; but the latter information would not *paraphrase* the content of the former make-believe statement in the way that a literal paraphrase would capture the corresponding metaphorical one.
(c) Fictional statements can be harmlessly described as being about a fictional world of their own, but corresponding to metaphorical statements there is no such special metaphorical world. To speak metaphorically is merely to speak in a special way about the real world (or the world in which the metaphor is used), whereas the author of a fiction is not talking in an oblique or rhetorical fashion about the real world itself (except when metaphor and make-believe merge into each other as in the case of allegorical fiction like *The Pilgrim's Progress*).

Searle opens his development of the pragmatics of fictional discourse with this distinction, which he makes in terms of two handy notions, namely of literalness and seriousness of speech (Searle, 1977). Figurative talk is supposed to be (most often) taken as serious but non-literal, whereas fictional talk is supposed to be taken as literal but non-serious.

It is obvious that we do not need to speak or learn a special *fictionese* in order to write, tell or appreciate imaginary narratives. Do we need to use plain English or Hindi with some special meanings? Sometimes one hears about tribal people who failed to appreciate play, acting or overt fiction – but that need not be explained in terms of their failure to grasp a special set of meanings. They may fail to see the point of avowedly untrue representations. Most young children do not need any special training for grasping the mechanism of fiction-talk, whereas the deviation from literal meaning in poetry demands a specially cultivated sensibility. Thus the lines:

Such dearth of room to stay
In the month of May,
With so many blossoms and so many bees!
My private Paradise – so small it is!
Roomy enough for the two of us – just us – a pair of immortals.[8]

have one literal and one suggested figurative meaning. (That is, at least, the naive view! Davidson, of course, would disagree.) Everyone who understands the first may not fully fathom the second. But to understand either it is not necessary to know whether it occurs in a fictional narrative, an autobiography or a real-life love letter. Yet the sentence, "Since then the Prince and the Princess became a pair of immortals", which does not make *use* of any figure of speech and retains the literal import of every word, needs to be placed in a fictional context to be properly understood. Thus it is clear that there is no special fictional *language*, nor are there any special fictional *meanings* of language. But is there a special fictional *use* of language?

An affirmative answer to the last question could be given in the following form: "The writer of fiction has his own repertoire of illocutionary acts." Unfortunately, Searle rather emphatically brands such a view as "incorrect". His argument for this verdict is too quick. The carelessly stated general premise for his criticism can be called *The Functionality Principle*: "the illocutionary act (or acts) performed in the utterance of a sentence is a function of the meaning of the sentence" (Searle 1977, p. 236).

Now, the functionality principle can yield the desired refutation only if Searle can claim on its basis *both* that two utterances of a sentence with the same meaning cannot enable us to perform two different illocutionary acts *and* that the sentence "The Princess danced unhappily with the Prince" means the same in a newspaper report as in a fairy tale. While we have agreed with the second conjunct of the above claim, its first conjunct does not follow simply from the functionality principle, unless meaning is supposed to be the *sole* determinant of illocutionary acts. Here are two counter-examples to such a stringent interpretation of the functionality principle. Take the sentence: "We take off our shoes in this room" (or, "I could not buy a second-hand computer!"). It could be used to make an assertion or a request for advice. It will be odd[9] to insist that when intended as a request, it does not carry its literal meaning. I think it does. Distinct illocutionary acts of describing and urging could be effected without changing meaning or even going beyond *literal* use.

Less controversially, it is absolutely essential that for *modus ponens* to go through, an unasserted p (in "if p then q") should mean exactly the same as the asserted p (in the premise "p"); yet what can be a clearer case of difference in illocutionary action than the difference between assuming and asserting? Searle has no good reason, therefore, to pass from the sameness of meaning to the sameness of illocutionary acts.

Furthermore if it is "incorrect" to hold that a fiction-writer performs *different* illocutionary acts by using sentences with identical meanings, then it must be "correct" to hold that he performs the *same* illocutionary acts as a factual reporter would. But this is both blatantly false and inconsistent with Searle's own pretence account of fictional discourse (which I discuss below).

Quite predictably, therefore, when Searle comes to provide his own positive answer to the question: "what exactly is the speech-act performed by the storyteller?" he says something which, I think, is very hard to distinguish from the position he calls "incorrect". The author of a fiction, he says, non-deceptively pretends to perform that series of illocutionary acts (e.g. assertion, description, characterisation, identification, explanation, etc.) which he would actually be performing had he been using the same utterances to recount a series of events of the actual world. This answer evidently shares the negative force of the rejected answer: when we use a sentence S in telling a story we are *not* performing the same illocutionary act as the one we would have performed if we used S in recording an event. *Pretending to do X is surely not to do X*, whatever else it may be.[10] Some paragraphs later Searle clearly recognises that Wittgenstein was right to emphasise that telling stories is a *separate language-game*, and also that one has to learn some additional conventions in order to participate in it. Thus, "To someone who did not understand the separate conventions of fiction, it would seem that fiction is merely lying."[11]

If we are ready to admit that the practice of making up a fiction is governed by conventions other than those governing the practice of describing the world, why aren't we ready to admit that the story-teller performs a different kind of illocutionary act? It remains a mystery why *Searle* should be afraid that accepting a separate illocutionary *force* behind fictional utterances would commit us to a separate set of *meanings* for them.

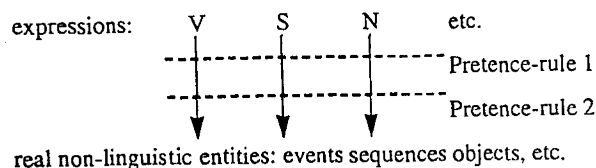
He seems to go further in the direction of identifying his own position with that of his alleged opponent (namely the philosopher who holds that "newspaper accounts contain one class of illocutionary acts and fictional literature contains another class of illocutionary acts"[12] when he comes to what he calls his "second conclusion":

> What makes it a work of fiction is, so to speak, the illocutionary stance that the author takes toward it, and that stance is a matter of the complex illocutionary intentions that the author has when he writes or otherwise composes it.
>
> Searle, ibid., p. 237

If the non-deceptive pretence of the story-teller is to be taken as the assumption of a *different* illocutionary *stance*, what is wrong in conceding that story-telling consists of a *different* series of illocutionary *acts* altogether? Searle's positive picture of fictional discourse gets more muddled with his unclear conceptions of vertical and

horizontal conventions. Vertical ones are the so-called "meaning rules" which remain unchanged across the Searlean division between serious and non-serious discourse. As against these, he conceives of a distinct set of rules which, roughly, are those that stipulate the exact kind of suspension of disbelief required by a certain story-teller. Adoption of these horizontal conventions determines what Searle calls the specific illocutionary stance that the story-teller takes (although it does not substantially change the nature of the illocutionary act!). Mastery over the horizontal rules is apparently no part of the semantic competence of the story-teller or the listener, although it is, presumably, part of his *pragmatic* competence, namely his capacity to play the language-game of story-telling. Thus, these horizontal rules (which, characteristically enough, do not connect a set of linguistic entities with a set of non-linguistic ones but just indicate in what way the vertical semantic conventions are supposed to be held in abeyance) "enable the speaker to use words with their literal meanings without undertaking the commitments that are normally required by those meanings" (Searle, ibid., p. 238).

I am far from clear as to the precise nature of these horizontal conventions and can only dimly see its appeal as a picture of the following kind



Would Searle want to say that in guarding our fictional use of ordinary expressions from referring to the ground floor non-linguistic entities, the horizontal rules at their intersection points with the standard vertical conventions create a set of pretence-counterparts of those entities? Do we have, in other words, mock events, mock sequences and mock objects in the circled nodes above corresponding to fictional verbs, fictional sentences and fictional names? He seems to say something very similar in distinguishing between pretending to refer to a real crime investigator (in F1) and actually referring to a fictional crime investigator created by the act of pretence (in F2). Admitting that the logical structure of pretending is indeed very complicated, Searle proceeds to throw light on this as follows:

> By pretending to refer to a person [she, the author] creates a fictional character. Notice that she does not refer to a fictional character because there was no antecedently existing character ... Now, once that fictional character has been created, we who are standing outside the fictional story can really refer to a fictional person.[13]
>
> Searle, ibid., p. 240

Does this, incidentally, explain why Searle would not agree to categorise talk about Sherlock Holmes as a different kind of illocutionary act? At least, all readers' and critics' statements about him and other characters in that set of fiction are straightforward assertions, testable for truth-value to the same extent as newspaper reports.

But what about Conan Doyle's utterances which Searle would definitely categorise as "not reporting but only pretending to report"? Don't they at least constitute a separate class of illocutionary acts? Searle's answer is still negative. I do not think there is any way of making that answer consistent with his own construal of pretence. I can highlight certain considerations which would articulate the exact nature of the dependence that the author's performances show upon what would have been corresponding illocutionary acts of a describer of the real world. But I cannot see how that dependence can be used to deny that the two sorts of illocutionary acts are distinct.

Thus we can justify the much weaker (and almost uniformly unchallenged) thesis that the illocutionary acts performed by the fiction-maker often closely mimic the corresponding illocutionary acts that would have been performed by a fact-stater. Here Searle enunciates the principle that pretending to do an act A generally involves doing parts of the actual act A. When in a play we pretend to kill a villain, we actually perform certain movements which would form parts of an actual murdering act. The unlucky boy who plays the part of a glutton in a drama may incur an actual exhaustion of the jaws without eating much food. Hence,

> It is a general feature of the concept of pretending that one can pretend to perform a higher order or complex action by *actually* performing lower order or *less* complex actions which are constitutive parts of the higher order or complex actions.
>
> Searle, ibid., p. 238

But, this time Searle seems simply to be mistaken; pretence of ø-ing is not something less than real ø-ing (although it is something different from really ø-ing).

There is a convenient Fregean picture which detaches the *assertoric* force of a statement from the thought expressed by it. It is supposed to be made more convincing by the fact that different kinds of force can attach to the same judgmental content, resulting in utterances of different *moods*. We have seen how Searle's view echoes the Fregean idea that across a fictional and a world-descriptive context a sentence does not change its thought content at all. It retains the same sense. Does it, then, in a fictional employment, simply lose its assertoric force? Since assertoric force is associated in Frege's theory with latching the judgeable contents onto their pegs of reference, namely truth-values, can we say that by stopping short of reaching their normal vertical destinations, the fictional names are simply lifted away from their references and, hence, the fictional sentences simply shed their assertoric force? This sounds like the strategy of treating fictive statements as the antecedents of subjunctive conditionals – expressing dangling thoughts which are not asserted. Despite obvious charms, this view deserves rejection.

Pretending to ø usually is not less but more complex an action than ø-ing. As anyone who has ever acted in a play should know, when on the stage someone pretends to perform any linguistic or non-linguistic convention-governed act, he or she usually finds it much more difficult than the sincere performance of that act. It takes talent to play the part of a mourner at a death, not simply because the actor is not actually mourning, but because – in many modern (e.g. Brechtian) as well as classical forms of theatre the actor is not even supposed to be taken as actually mourning. Everybody in the audience should (and usually does) understand that the actor is not sad but is representing somebody else's – maybe an unreal person's – sadness.

In Brechtian drama, for instance, absolute delusive absorption into the world of the play is not desired of the spectator.

Dummett analyses the phenomenon (pointing out a similar misleading suggestion of Frege's[14]) with adequate sensitivity. By *actually* shaking hands with someone on the stage, the actor pretends to greet, not because he omits to follow a certain convention, namely that of fully greeting, but because he follows all the conventions of greeting only does it "on the stage, in a theatre, at an announced time". The person playing the part of a maid in *Oedipus Rex* who shouts, "Jocasta has died" *pretends* to assert, not because she stops short of adding the behavioural counterpart of the assertion sign to her expression of the thought that Jocasta has died, but because she does everything that constitutes assertion of that thought *plus* follows the conventions of play-acting. The "dramatic force" is added to the assertoric force instead of supplanting it. To assert in make-believe is not *not to assert* but to assert in a context which automatically attaches an additional make-believe force operator to it. Dummett further argues that it would only be an apparent economy to assimilate the separate dramatic and assertoric forces to one single sign for assertoric in-a-drama force because we will then need a whole array of new force signs corresponding to all kinds of linguistic as well as non-linguistic acts.

> We certainly should not want to introduce one new sign for dramatic assertion, another for dramatic command, another for dramatic greeting, another for dramatic killing etc.
>
> Dummett, ibid., p. 311.

His proposal, therefore, that we regard make-believe assertions as fully-fledged speech acts made under "a special language-game" accords very neatly with my own proposal. But it is also important to notice at this point that what we shall call the game (2) of fiction-making is not just one among the other language-games such as those of describing states of affairs, asking questions or cracking jokes. The dramatic force is not just another force like the assertoric, erotetic or optative, because all these can be governed by the dramatic force. The distinction between the language-games of talking about the actual world, talking in and about fiction, talking about phenomenal objects, etc. cuts across the distinction between the language-games of stating, enquiring, expressing wishes etc, if the latter can be called varieties of language-games at all in the same sense.

4.12 *Problems with Pretence*

The extremely influential theory that the author and/or the enjoyer of fiction engages in a pretence has come to grief recently in the hands of Kendall Walton, who explains fictional discourse in terms of his complex notion of make-believe. The pretence theory has also been attacked by Gregory Currie who takes fiction-making as a specific communicative act with irreducibly "fictive" intentions and fiction-enjoying as make-believedly attributing beliefs to the narrator. Walton argues that "fiction-making is not reasonably classified as an illocutionary action".[15] I have tried to show above that the pretence theory boils down to treating fictive and fictional utterances as commissions of a different set of illocutionary

acts. Hence it is quite natural that Walton, who rejects the illocutionary-act model of fiction, would also reject the pretence theory. Currie accepts the illocutionary-act model, yet concludes that "pretence has little or nothing to do with fiction".[16] Since I think that the basic insight behind the pretence theory is valuable and correct, I shall consider some of the objections to it. The objections are ingenious but they do not work in the end.

First, the objections which question the *sufficiency* of the pretence theory. Is non-deceptive pretence to do something enough to make it fictional that one is doing it? If pretending to do ϕ is taken as acting *as if* one is doing ϕ, then the answer is "no". Walton gives the counter-example of a harpsichordist who plays his instrument *as if* he were playing the piano without thereby making it *fictional* either to himself or to his audience that he is playing the piano. This, of course, is not a refutation of the pretence theory because the harpsichordist is not even *pretending* to play the piano. Currie gives a stronger example to show how non-deceptive pretence can fail to generate fiction. A mimic can put on a show of speaking like Humphrey Bogart without making it fictional or without inviting his hearers to make believe that Bogart is speaking. Currie thinks we could describe such mimicry as non-deceptive pretence. I am not so sure. The mimic takes credit for the fact that *he* can speak like Bogart rather than for pretending that *Bogart* was speaking. Philosophers often rehearse a faulty line of reasoning or the position they are going to refute. Descartes pretends to be a universal sceptic in the first *Meditation*. It seems implausible to say that Descartes is generating a fiction. Now, I do not see these counter-examples to be very compelling. It is true that a pedagogical pretence of adopting a mistaken position does not amount to a *work* of fiction, but to the extent that it is not fictional it is not so much of a pretence as an act of quoting or displaying some propositions. The sort of non-deceptive pretence which is adequate for fiction generation has to have an explicit invitation to imagine that p is the case rather than a mere imitation or parody of someone saying that p is the case. These arguments against the adequacy of the pretence account uniformly take a very weak notion of "pretending that" (e.g. acting as if, mimicking, assuming for the sake of an argument, etc.) and a very strong notion of fiction-making (namely the act of generating a literary, visual or theatrical work of fiction). No wonder they look persuasive!

The more serious charges question that it is even *necessary* to engage in a pretence in order for there to be a fiction. Walton first recommends that we extend our attention beyond literary fiction to fictions generated by paintings and sculptures to realize how the pretence account fails. Now, of course, by drawing unicorns fighting with each other an artist does not pretend to *assert* anything. But in so far as the drawing makes it fictional that those unicorns are fighting, the artist surely invites us to pretend that we see (or at least see realistic depictions of) some unicorns fighting. It is no essential part of the pretence theory that all "pretending-that" is pretending to assert that; neither is it essential that the pretence be something that the "author" does herself. The author could be making some props in virtue of which we are enabled to pretend that something is the case. "Pretending that" is by

itself a complicated concept upon the oversimplification of which most of the refutations of the pretence theory rest.

Finally Walton gives his "clinching" case, not only against the pretence theory but also against all illocutionary-act theories of (literary) fiction. (This is an imaginary example. So you have to *pretend that...*) You come across a rock on the surface of which the cracks make a series of patterns which spell out "Once upon a time there were three bears. ..." Such a "work" of fiction can be enjoyed as a story unlike a warning or a historical record like "Beware! The universe ends in two minutes" found in such fortuitous rock writing. It would be extremely irrational to take this as a warning or a prediction. Since fictions can be found to exist in such rock-cracks, or in palaces or demons accidentally depicted by clouds lit by the setting sun, it is proved that you do not need any acts of pretending in order to generate fictions. No author ever had to pretend to inform us that "once upon a time there were three bears" for us to learn from the rock that, fictionally, there were these three bears.

Initially, the above thought experiment indeed appears to be a neat refutation of all pretence theories of fiction. A closer look, however, brings out that there are *two* layers of pretence involved in enjoying such apparently authorless fictions rather than *none*.

Just as no one can seriously take such unintended "inscriptions" as carrying any factual content, no one can seriously take them as actually "telling" a tale. Discovering these "rock-crack writings" is hardly like discovering an ancient manuscript of a fable. But just as one can use tomato sauce (made for culinary rather than theatrical purposes) in a game of pretence about blood, one can use those natural and accidental cracks to pretend that some meaningful bit of *language* is inscribed on the rock. Once this initial pretence is permitted, one has the option of regarding the mock inscription as making a statement of fact or as telling an imaginary tale. The first option could be taken if the cracks read like newspaper reports, if orthographically they resemble the sentence, "Bush wishes to crush Saddam Hussain." When the second option is chosen, there is a second pretence which comes into play. The imaginative child *pretends* that those marks on the rock constitute written symbols inviting him to *pretend* (rather than believe) that once upon a time there were three silly bears ... and so on. Fiction is generated precisely because there are these two acts of pretending.

Having defended the basic connection between fiction and deliberate nondeceptive *pretending that*, I must confess that *pretending that* itself is a notion so much in need of clarification that explaining the pragmatics of game (2) in its terms may not be all that illuminating.

In this context I should clearly draw a distinction between pretending to do something and pretending that something is the case, a distinction I have already hinted at earlier. There is a sense of "pretending to read" (discussed by Wittgenstein in remark 159 of his *Philosophical Investigations*) which is quite inapplicable to the case just analysed above: the child who engages in a *pretence that* she is reading a story off the cracks on a rock is not pretending to read in the

manner of someone who has memorised some Russian sentences and repeats them as if he were reading out of a Russian text (Wittgenstein speaks of cheating here, but this could be done nondeceptively in a play too). The reader of the rock story *really* reads what she makes believe to be strings of letters making sense. Still, since those marks were not made to be read as language, I would say that she is pretending that she is reading a story. I would resist, for fear of the above mentioned confusion, any reduction of this activity to the act of pretending to read.

Pretending to do ø often gravitates towards a merely negative idea of seeming to do ø without really doing it. Now, of the following four suggestible entailments the first two are readily seen to be false:

not pretending to ø → really ø ing
not really ø ing → pretending to ø
really ø ing → not pretending to ø
pretending to ø → not really ø ing

A sleeping actor who is neither pretending to commit suicide nor actually committing suicide disproves the first pair. But, at first glance, the last two claims seem to be true. Yet a theatrical pretence of showing hatred towards Hitler is quite compatible with, at the same time, really showing hatred towards Hitler. Austin's window cleaner who uses window cleaning as a cover for spying is said to be at the same time cleaning the window and pretending to clean the window. This example has been discussed a lot in the literature.[17] Perhaps such window cleaning is *not a pretence* but a *pretext*. I think there is a germ of truth in the rule that pretending to do ø and really doing ø cannot, on any occasion, become one and the same act. (Surely not doing ø or doing part of ø is not enough for pretending to do ø: we have already established that in the previous section.) Even when these two acts are performed together, they are two different acts. Showing someone how to paint a portrait and painting a portrait are distinct acts, but they can be co-performed. Similarly pretending that p must be a different illocutionary act from making a statement to the effect that p, even if they are executed simultaneously by the same locutionary moves.

Thus it is possible that while an author pretends that he is speaking about Mr N (as part of playing game (2)), he is simultaneously really referring to Mr N but saying something fictional about him. When we comment as to how much of the story is factual and assert outside of it that Mr N really exists, it is important to treat even this act of reference to Mr N as *part of the pretence* rather than evaluate it as a plain game (1) move of referring to the actual man. The singular existential has informational surprise value only when it is, as it were, about the fictional Mr N, whereas about the actual Mr N it is trivially true that he is real although the fictional and actual Mr. N are one and the same person. It is only the distinction between treating a linguistic act *as* an act of pretence and treating it *as* an act of straight referring which makes all the difference.

It will be clear in a subsequent section that Conan Doyle's pretending *that* he is referring to Holmes has a definite logical advantage over his pretending *to* refer to

Holmes. To anticipate: if there is no Holmes for Conan Doyle really to refer to, then there is also no Holmes for him to pretend to refer to. The distinction I am drawing is based on the following four points.

First, I can *pretend to* only concerning my own states and activities, whereas *pretending that* can represent a situation where I do not figure at all. Cervantes pretends that (and invites us to pretend that) Don Quixote attacked a windmill. It is far from clear what he could be feigning to do by writing those sentences in his novel. Two strong candidates suggest themselves: he was feigning to believe or know that Don Quixote did so, and, he was feigning to assert *that*. I have Berkeleyan qualms about accepting "feigning to believe p" as a paraphrase of "pretending that p". I can pretend or join in a pretence that a particular penguin wanted to fly like a seagull in Antarctica *and no human being ever had any inkling of this desire in that animal*. If I pretended to *believe* this, wouldn't the content of my pretence be contradictory? My worry about assertion is this: some fiction writers pretend that they are ignorant, unsure[18] and noncommittal between alternative accounts of what really happened (in the story world). Yet others *pretend to assert*, say, that a certain fictional person is very learned and noble, while making it true in the story that this person is a petty-minded charlatan. Thus it is possible to pretend not to assert that p or *pretend to assert* that not-p, while pretending (making believe) that p. So I think it is best not to reduce pretending that p to pretending to believe or assert that p.

Second, *pretending to* necessarily involves — however minimally — some personal performance. *Pretending that* may involve no dissembling activity at all. In getting caught up in a novel we pretend that so many things happened or are happening while just passively understanding the sentences of the novel (but to insist that we *pretend to understand* will, of course, be missing the mark widely).

Third, *pretending to* is usually limited to current actions, events and emotions. A child cannot pretend now to be dead tomorrow, or pretend to speak to a nymph one year ago but can easily pretend that something was or will be happening in the remote past or in a far-off future.

Finally, and most importantly, "pretend to" does not have the referential opacity which "pretend that" enjoys. After being told that Cervantes was pretending that Sancho Panza rode an ass, a Russell or Ryle cannot bother us with the question: *Who* is this Sancho Panza about whom Cervantes pretended that *he* rode an ass? The game (2) proper name "Sancho Panza" *unexportably* remains embedded within the opaque "C pretends that ..." context.

Of course, pretending that, or *propositional pretence*, brings its own bag of problems. It is notoriously difficult to perceive how Cervantes and his twentieth-century reader can take part in the same propositional pretence. Do they just pretend that they do so? Here perhaps we can treat the *text* as the common prop through which the identity of the content of different acts of *pretence that* can be checked and preserved. The issues here are exceedingly difficult to disentangle. Minus his ill-argued animosity towards pretence accounts of all sorts, Walton's theory of make-believe is, I think, the best description of what it is to play game (2). What

he would call "making believe that p", I have no qualms in calling "pretending that p".

4.13 *Are Fictive Statements Shrouded Imperatives?*

Towards the end of his paper, Searle discusses the interesting case of dramatic stage direction. A dramatic text consists mostly of dialogues to be (mock) spoken by the actors but also partly if a series of serious directions by the author to the actors. The playwright does not do the pretending himself (unlike the novelist who almost all along pretends that he is letting us know about a world which retains varying degrees of continuity with the real one). He is, rather, "writing a recipe for pretence". It is the audience of a play who then takes on the role of *pretenders that*. Richard Burton cannot *pretend to* be Macbeth unless the viewers of the play also *pretend that* Macbeth is out there etc. Sometimes (when an author identifies himself with the narrator) the author himself can apparently and literally pretend to be someone other than himself[19] or pretend to be many such people in the course of writing different parts of a fiction in the first person of several leading characters.

Shakespeare's *Henry V* has a chorus at the opening of every act which explicitly requests us, the audience, to "imagine", "suppose", "think", "conjecture" that such and such things are happening; that within the "girdle of these walls/Are now confined two mighty monarchies"; that "when we talk of horses, that you see them/Printing their proud hoofs i' the' receiving earth"; that the passage of many years has been encapsulated into an hour-glass — a whole series of invitations to *pretend that*. The chorus freely switches from such requests to apparent statements of fact (which happen to coincide broadly with historical reports — only, the succession of events happens "In motion of no less celerity/Than that of thought"). The chorus, at the start of Act II, proceeds with a mock description of history: "Now all the youth of England are on fire"; at the start of Act IV with an instruction: "Now entertain conjecture of a time" until finally we are told, "Yet sit and see/Minding true things by what their mock'ries be."

Should we then embrace the suggestion that all fictive discourse consists of instruction by the author, and that fictional discourse is constituted by our indirect reports of such instruction? Consider the paraphrase of "Mrs Gamp is an old woman" (when understood in the context of the relevant Dickens novel) (G) by "In Dickens's story *Martin Chuzzlewit* one is instructed to think what the world would be like if it contained a person named "Mrs Gamp" and who was an old woman" (G'). The above paraphrase was suggested by Clark (1980). Taking off from the common speech forms appropriate for beginnings of fiction, e.g. "Let's imagine what would have happened if" or "Suppose we are transported to an unknown planet", etc., Clark's suggestion accommodates several robust intuitions. Like the just refuted account, it takes into consideration the fact that the question of truth does not arise about fictive discourse. Requests are made or not made, they are complied with or not complied with, but they cannot be true or false. Since "It is true that Hamlet saw the apparition of his father" (uttered by us) means that

Shakespeare did indeed request us to imagine that a certain Prince of Denmark saw his father's spirit, it would be true or false only on the basis of whether Shakespeare actually does request us so to suppose. As to Shakespeare's own statements, they are implicit (or sometimes explicit) instructions — "think this", "think that" or (to the actors) "pretend to do this", "pretend to do that", etc. – to which truth evaluation is completely irrelevant. Clark elaborates his theory to make room for fiction within fiction. Thus, if, in fiction f_1 a certain character c_1 tells us another fictional story f_2 about c_2, then

"In f_1 we are *asked* or instructed to think what the world would be like if it contained someone c_1 who would merely imagine what the world would be like if it contained someone called c_2."

Of course, such *imperativism* would not hold about the outside talk of characters. Thus, "c_1 is a stereotyped tragic hero" could not correctly be paraphrased as "In f_1 we are instructed to think about what the world would be like if c_1 were a stereotyped tragic hero." This, however, may not be an unwelcome result. Inside-the-fiction talk about Hamlet is and should be recognised by all correct theories as being about a different entity from that which the literary critics' character locution is about. It is about the first sort of talk that the apparent problem of truth without reference or reference without existence arose. And that problem is undoubtedly avoided by non-descriptivism of this sort.

In spite of the strong appeal of the above theory, a careful scrutiny seems to reveal a basic weakness which it shares with all paraphrastic theories. The paraphrase of "It is true that Hamlet broods" by "It is true that Shakespeare requests us to imagine Hamlet as someone who broods" would not help. The vacuousness of "Hamlet", which prompted us to think of such rephrasing in the first place, will mar the factual truth of the second claim as much as that of the first. If there is no individual of that description who can be truly said to brood, then there is none about whom Shakespeare can ask us to imagine that *he* broods. We have, finally, therefore, to back up this analysis (if it is to apply to straightforward truth-claiming *fictional* rather than fictive statements) with a Russellian sweeping away of the fictional name. Thus, we end up with, "Shakespeare requests us to imagine that there existed one and only one Prince of Denmark who was called Hamlet and that he used to brood", or some such. That avoids reference to any spurious entity. But Shakespeare's request to us to pretend that a general existential statement is true is neither sufficient nor necessary for the truth of the above F2-type statement.

Shakespeare surely does request us to imagine something (although he could not, strictly speaking, have made the request of us for historical reasons); but our understanding of fictional discourse as reporting on what goes on in the story is philosophically less simple and yet practically more straightforward than trying to figure out what Shakespeare exactly requests us to imagine. An existential reduction of the content of Shakespeare's requested supposition makes the paraphrase even wider off the mark: to pretend that precisely one individual broods is quite distinct from pretending that one precise individual broods. The implausibility of the account just examined comes out clearly if we try applying it to the following truth-claiming F2.2.2 statement:

Much as Hamlet hates Claudius, he can never denounce him with the ardent indignation that boils straight from his blood when he reproaches his mother, for the more vigorously he denounces his uncle the more powerfully does he stimulate to activity his own unconscious and "repressed" complexes.

Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, p. 88

It would be anachronistic to say that Shakespeare asked us to imagine *that*.

4.14 *The Analytic Account of Authorial Omniscience*

It all started with philosophical musings over the author's immunity to error. The "discovery" that Holmes had an equally gifted elder brother did not require any arduous search by Conan Doyle since he could not help but reach a true conclusion about Holmes. This trivial infallibility of fictive statements makes philosophers suspect that such statements are only true, if at all, in an analytic or stipulative sense. Noticing that we cannot paraphrase fictive statements by quoting them directly or indirectly inside true in-the-world statements concerning particular works of fiction, Martin and Scotch (1974) attempt to learn from such intuitive tendencies of paraphrasing fictive statements. They find two clues: first, that whatever is true of Hamlet is so because Shakespeare wrote or implied it about him; second, that to announce the truth or falsehood of such fictional generalities as "Unicorns have one horn" or "Unicorns are carnivorous" we do not have to look into the world but only at the definitional considerations associated with the empty class name "Unicorns". This tempts us to the conclusion that fictional proper names are *concept names* without denotations (not in the sense that they are names of concepts). Shakespeare, in apparently relating things about Hamlet, tells us what it would take for someone to be Hamlet without ever implying that anyone actually has had those characteristics. Martin and Scotch would probably render "Hamlet soliloquises" as:

$$(\forall x)[(x \text{ is a Prince of Denmark and so on, and } x \text{ is called "Hamlet"}) \rightarrow (x \text{ soliloquises})]$$

which apparently does not assume that

$$(\exists x)\ (x \text{ is a Prince of Denmark}).$$

Even if we ignore the logical difficulties with the concept *Hamletness* (to give an account of this without prior commitment to Hamlet's existence is pretty hard), the analysis has the awkward consequence that almost everything said about Hamlet would then be analytically true. The only difference between F1 and F2 statements would be that the former would be axiomatic and the latter lemmatic. But we do feel that we could make mistakes and extract fresh information about fictional characters. Inadvertence and inadequate perception may, of course, sometimes explain why even what is logically true or false is taken to be a new synthetic truth or contingent falsehood. But when Agatha Christie writes a new story about Miss Marples, we do not seem to think that she just tightened the restrictions on someone's counting as Miss Marples. We most clearly feel that she is telling us new and unexpected things about her which could well have happened to Miss Marples.

Proponents of the *analyticist view* of fictional discourse themselves express some indecision as to how much of an author's narrative is *stipulatively* definitional with respect to a fictional item and how much of it is contingent in some awkward sense. The real weakness of such a theory, as we shall see in the last chapter, is that while giving a stronger modal status to F1 and F2, it gives an apparently harmless weaker modal status to F3 which seems to be dubious in the final analysis. It would be an incredible coincidence, but it is still conceivable, that Shakespeare (even unknown to himself?) was referring to a real person when he used the name "Prospero". Since "Prospero" is a concept word which is supposed merely to be contingently vacuous, someone might find out by historical research that the associated criterial description fitted a real person, and, hence, conclude that Prospero existed, despite our belief to the contrary. Although this sounds all right in so far as we lightly say that Prospero might have existed, this result will be found counter-intuitive in the end. Given that Prospero is a native to game 2, *he* could not be found in any possible world, and surely not in the actual one.

4.15 *In Between the Games*

Having witnessed the failure of the crude Russellian, emotivist, imperativist, analyticist and different shades of "*pretence*" theories about the meaningfulness of fictional discourse, we are now in a position to introduce an alternative approach. The speech acts involved in fictive (F1-type) discourse can be considered under two distinct descriptions. They can be looked upon as moves in game (4) — whereby certain abstract objects (which we call *person-kinds* in Section 5.2) are chosen and given the role of *characters* – as abstract literary entities. There is no pretence of singular reference involved at this level if we take the author to be talking just about those characters in an analytic or criterial fashion, letting us know what it would take for anyone to count as someone like Macbeth or Moriarty. But the author does more. He pretends that there actually were (are or will be) single individuals who happened to have these characters and that he is giving us some information specifically about those individuals (who might not have had those characters). These very linguistic acts of pretending to refer to people and pretending to report truths (even falsehoods to be corrected later, e.g. Sherlock Holmes's death) can then be considered under another description as moves in game (2), as genuine reports of events and references to people which are made available as items due to the author's make-believe stance taken about the blueprints – the *characters* – namely, the pretence that they *are* satisfied or fulfilled by certain particular individuals.

With F2-type, i.e. checkable and fallible fictional discourse, there can be only one kind of straightforward understanding: understanding them as moves in game (2).

It is because of the absolute freedom that the author has in his character-choosing moves inside game (4) that fictive statements display these non-referential, non-truth-claiming characteristics even inside game (2). We have to take fictive statements as generally infallible and incorrigible, like some special statements in game (1) (e.g. "I exist" or "I have hereby uttered a sentence") which are supposed to be self-verifying and, hence, immune to doubt. This is what creates the likely illusion

that fictive statements might actually be performative utterances or even imperatives. But, as we have noticed in both games (2) and (4), fictive utterances can be taken as descriptive in a minimal sense. From a game (2) point of view they are used to describe – in an oracular fashion – some particular items which make-believedly satisfy the blueprints – the non-particular characters that are selected and described by the corresponding game (4) moves.

4.2 THE QUESTION OF TRUTH

But, are all fictive statements routinely true even within game (2)? Here are some apparent counter-examples.

(a) Remarks made by characters of the fiction can be quoted or reported. These are fictive in the sense that they belong to the body of the fiction and are not made by readers, but yet they can surely be false. If they are ignored because they are merely reported speech, what do we say about the lines: "and there, deep down in that dreadful cauldron of swirling water and seething foam will lie for all times the most dangerous criminal and the foremost champion of the law of their generation"? We find them at the end of the text of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Final Problem*, but in the Holmes corpus they turn out to be partly false. This, too, is actually taken care of by the reported speech construal. The author reports that a character, possibly the fictional narrator (Watson in this case), says that p; if p is false that does not make the author's report false, even inside game (2). It remains true in fiction that Watson wrote those things in his journal.

(b) There is another more serious sort of alleged counter-example to the general rule that F1 statements cannot but be true. David Lewis quotes a zoologist's comment to the effect that Sherlock Holmes must have been wrong in believing that a Russell's viper climbed up the bell rope and killed the victim because it is not capable of such a movement. He tones down the apparent audacity of the zoologist's comment by observing: "The story never quite says that Holmes was right." Maybe it didn't, but what if the story actually did say so? In the Holmes stories, there is often clearly a narrator other than the author who can be blamed. But if there was a fiction (supposed to be as realistic as the Holmes stories) in which the author himself described the Russell's viper as vertically climbing up a bell rope, couldn't the zoologist say that the fictive statement was false? As long as the changes are minor and have some subjunctive likelihood, we do not complain about the author who reshuffles his realistic background a little bit. If the changes are too vital, such that (maybe excepting the name) a real city or a historical personage is changed beyond recognition in the story, we say it is not the same city or person at all. Yet, as Scriven (1954) remarks,

> there is a middle class of errors, unintentional but not ludicrous, which we do criticise. If an author writing a novel about Oxford along the lines of Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe*, constantly had characters driving along Turl Street from High Street to Broad Street ... stepping out of Trinity into Longwall Street and dining with the undergraduates at All Souls, we would say she had some of her facts wrong.
>
> Scriven (1954) p. 187

Here, we are not forgetting Sydney's reminder that the author "nothing asserteth" and hence, "lieth not". In such contexts, the statement, though belonging to a general body of non-assertive fictive discourse, *does* claim faithfulness to the actual topography, etc. of Oxford, and, hence, runs the risk of failing to correspond to it. Within the author's fictive statements again, the narrative development (F1.2) might be inconsistent with, and hence, in a special fictional sense, "inaccurate about" previously set up fictional items, whereas the stage-setting lines run a greater risk of being "false about" that part of the actual world to which the author takes the stance of keeping faithful.

c) Some parts of the story itself may be charged with falsehood in more than a Humean or Russellian sense. The novel can have a false social or political message. Thus, even a modern parable like Orwell's *Animal Farm* may be found by some Marxists to be thoroughly "untrue". When Aesop's fables are praised for their truth, we are not concerned with the trivial truth of all the fictive utterances within the story.

None of these counter-examples are, of course, absolutely intractable. The first has already been neutralised by the reported-speech explanation. The second can be evaded by noticing that such fallibility arises only in those parts of a fiction which are not purely fictive but which introduce a mixture of alleged history or reportage. The third sort, again, can be dealt with by the following consideration. It is not the story's constitutive statements themselves which are thus criticised as false (they cannot be because they are our only clue to the 'world' of the fiction, which, as a whole, is said to represent the factual world more or less faithfully) but rather the insinuated portrayal of the distinct real world. I can crack an unkind joke about a very kind and considerate friend in which he is depicted as mean. The joke itself cannot be a lie because it is a joke, although in certain contexts it might be *used* to give a false picture of him. Thus, the fictive discourse, which is itself exonerated of any such charge, may be utilised as a literary device to tell tacit lies about the world.

Because fictive discourse is not non-trivially judgeable as true or false, we should not think that it is, inside its own language-game, necessarily non-assertive or that it consists of unasserted contents "proposed for consideration, like hypotheses". This is a very tempting view (criticised earlier in 4.1.1) held by Alvin Plantinga. Quoting the following valuable passage from Sir Philip Sydney to which we have already made passing reference,

> think I none so simple would say that Aesop lied in the tales of his beasts; for who thinks that Aesop writ it for actually true is worthy to have his name chronicled among the beasts he writeth of.

he jumps to the conclusion:

> The author does not assert these propositions; he exhibits them, calls them to our attention, invites us to consider and explore them. And, hence, his immunity from error.
>
> Plantinga (1974) p. 162

But this view does not do any justice to our common intuition that the author, in however error-free a manner, *describes* the fictional world. The question of truth, even of F2-type discourse (e.g. "Othello was an Eskimo", which Plantinga agrees is not so immune) arises only inside the fiction. And inside the fiction should we not say that the author is giving some sort of an unchallengeable, authentic report of what took place at a certain time, in a certain place, to a certain set of individuals? If we cannot appeal to what the author states, how can we determine which F2 assertions are true? True, some stories can start with an explicit introduction in the subjunctive mood: "Had Socrates been acquitted at the last moment and did not drink the hemlock, let us imagine what would have happened." But up to this point the story has not entered fully-fledged F1 talk. The moment it starts to tell us about the fictional world where Socrates is not found guilty, etc., the author deserts the subjunctive mood and takes the make-believe stance of a faithful chronicler of facts. Only the facts are such that all that the author asserts about them transpires to be true. Story-telling is a kind of telling, after all, rather than a mere piling up of a series of dangling "what if" clauses.

Moreover, adopting a non-assertionist view of fictive discourse damages the simplicity of our corresponding account of F2-type talk. Plantinga would have to say that in trying to decide whether or not Holmes had an aquiline nose, we are merely trying to figure out what thoughts about the nose of someone (any old individual?), called Holmes, Conan Doyle offers us to entertain. We shall do better to respect the surface form of fictive statements and take them as assertions under a special make-believe force – Dummett seems to suggest – paying heed to the additional convention that they are made under, namely that of playing game (2). We have already shown how Frege was misled by this construal of fictive statements as representing unasserted thoughts. Plantinga gets into more serious muddles by taking the names used in fictive statements as stylistic variants of variables appearing in a stylised sentence, i.e. as schematic letters. But no sentence schema can ever express any complete thought, whether asserted or not. Thus, Plantinga's view of story-telling sentences makes them even further removed from assertions than Frege's. They not only stop short of asserting, but they do not even contain determinate thoughts. This way they look more like the manner in which Frege would look upon word questions or WH questions, i.e. as "gappy" thoughts offered for entertainment and imaginative (instead of factual) completion. No doubt this is the result of overemphasis on the non-referential, non-assertive appearance of the fictive sentences. When, in subsequent stories, Conan Doyle names Sherlock Holmes, he refers to him, much as we do, in retelling or reporting on that part of the corpus. The author is, therefore, better looked upon as *omniscient* rather than as omnipotent. In fact, besides the omniscient narrator, we can have even an unknowing narrator (e.g. in Kurosawa's *Rashomon*) who pleads ignorance about what *actually* happened, thereby impressing upon us that there is a fictional reality with eludes even *him*.

Just as the infallibility of *fictive* discourse is, more or less, beyond dispute, the fallibility, and hence truth-claim of *fictional* discourse is equally evident. Thus, without making the required inside/outside distinction, philosophers may regard all the following statements as equally false, or equally vacuously true, or equally

lacking in truth-values because of the flat treatment of all statements with empty subject terms, respectively, under a classical, free or presuppositional logic. But surely we have to treat each of the following statements differently:

(a) Holmes lived in Baker Street (F2)
(b) Holmes did not exist (F3)
(c) Holmes's wife did not exist (F2)
(d) Holmes acquired a cult following (F4)
(e) Holmes would have solved the ABC murders sooner than Poirot (F5 inside the Poirot game (2) because "Holmes" here functions like "a Holmes")
(f) Holmes symbolises mankind's ceaseless striving for truth (F4)

For our present purposes, distinguishing between the language games in which *a* and *b* are assessed for truth-value is absolutely crucial. Without such a distinction we do not know how to listen to the intuitive advice that they are incompatible as well as the equally intuitive suggestion that they are both true. The last chapter of this book is devoted entirely to the analysis of *b*-type sentences. For the rest of this chapter, therefore, we shall search for a correct account of the truth of *a*-type statements, or fictional utterances made by readers (other than the author).

It is obvious that when we claim truth for a sentence like "Hamlet was indecisive", we are suppressing the prefixed operator, "In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*". It also seems plausible to suppose that truth in a given fiction is *closed* under implication; that is to say if p implies q, then "In the fiction F, p" will entail "In the fiction F, q". This also takes care of the fact that: from the unprefixed truth that 221B Baker Street was a bank and the prefixed truth that in the stories Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street, the prefixed truth that "In the Holmes stories Holmes lived in a bank" would not follow, because at least one of the premises is not prefixed.

But all this is hardly illuminating, since we are still in darkness about the very crucial question: how exactly does the operator (which is obviously not truth functional) change the truth conditions of the prefixed sentence?

A notorious realist about possible worlds, David Lewis[20] first considers the naive answer: what is true in a fiction is what is true in all possible worlds where the plot of the fiction really takes place and where there are real objects corresponding to the fictional names and descriptions. He rejects this formulation because it is implicitly circular. Our mastery over the notion of the plot of a fiction is said to depend upon our notion of what is true in the fiction. To find out what is true in a fictional story by checking possible worlds where everything *that is true in that story* happens to be the case is to beg the question rather crassly. Avoiding the notion of the plot or even that of the work of fiction, in the abstract, Lewis makes a fresh start from the notion of different acts of story-telling. The basis of our truth definition for fictional statements lies in the nature of the pretence involved. To pretend to record a known fact is communicatively to make believe that one is recording a known fact. Hence, the formulation:

Analysis 0: A sentence of the form "In fiction f, ϕ is true if ϕ is true at every world where f is told as known fact rather than fiction.

The first distinguishing feature of this analysis is that it heeds the feature of game (2) that it is essential for a fiction to be a pretence. What is told as pretence cannot turn out to have been history. The other important feature of the analysis is that it assumes a notion of trans-world identity of the act of story-telling. Lewis does not commit himself on this issue and tries to keep two alternative interpretations of "worlds where the *same* fiction is told" open. Thus, it may either mean the numerically identical act of story-telling. For one thing, the worlds where the act of story-telling is explicitly said to become an act of fact-stating could hardly, I think, be described as worlds where the *same* story is told.

If there arises such an identity crisis with the story itself, what happens to the characters? Do the fictional names change roles in the subjunctively imagined transition from the actual to the possible worlds where the fiction becomes fact? Lewis has to admit that they do. Thus, he says that we use "Sherlock" in the actual world as a non-rigid designator, the flexible reference of which is determined by the inflexible sense which can be given by the parallel description: "Whichever inhabitant of the world that plays the role of Sherlock, including the role of being rigidly picked out by the name "S.H." when w is a world where someone plays it". In the actual world no one plays it, so "Sherlock" is contingently empty. But he thinks, curiously, that where Holmes stories are told as records of fact, "Sherlock" rigidly picks out Sherlock. This makes his account of fictional names outside and inside fiction obscure, if not incoherent.

However, Lewis does not stop with this analysis. It does not provide any criteria for the truth of claims that *we* make about what went on in the fiction although the author does not explicitly say so, making use of some un-prefixed premises along with prefixed ones to draw inferences precisely in the way we objected to earlier (concerning Holmes living in a bank). These are fictional statements which we have classified at the outset as F2.2. Thus, we claim that it is true in the fictional nexus of the Holmes stories that Holmes lived nearer to Paddington than to Waterloo Station, and that this is established by looking at a map of London. The stories don't specify this and, by analysis 0, *every* possible world where the stories are told as known facts need not also be a world where the actual map of London matches the London of that world; yet, we seem somehow inclined to say that it is better to judge the truth-value of that statement with respect to a world which is not *unnecessarily* unlike the actual world (hence, to declare it true).

Here, Lewis borrows an intuition from his own account of counter-factuals. "Reasoning about truth in fiction is very much like counterfactual reasoning," he remarks. In fictional conjectures of the sort in question we assume varying degrees of continuity with (or superimposition on) the actual world, trying to keep, as far as permitted by the story's explicit departure from reality, faithful to the facts as we know them. Thus, the revised criterion runs as follows.

Analysis 1: A sentence of the form "In fiction f ϕ " is non-vacuously true if some world where f is told as known fact and ϕ is true differs less from our actual world, on balance, than does any world where f is told as known fact but ϕ is not true. It is vacuously true if there are no possible worlds where f is told as known fact.[21]

He then brings forth a counter-example to even this formulation which is rather recondite. It shows roughly that the actual world, if conceived of in terms of our present scientific knowledge of it, may render many statements of older fictions (even F2.1 type) improbable. Hence, by this analysis, they would be false in so far as worlds where such statements would be true would differ more from the actual world than those where they would be false. But we want such statements to be judged *true* in the relevant fiction. To take Gregory Currie's imaginative example: suppose we come across a Victorian novel (call it "N") which casually mentions Mr Gladstone without depicting him explicitly as good or bad. The novel's storyline is consistent with virtually any moral character being attributed to Gladstone. Now suppose subsequent historical research reveals Gladstone *actually* to have been quite a nasty fellow. According to Lewis's *Analysis 1*, then "In fiction N, Gladstone is a good man" will be false because any world where it is true will be more unlike the actual world than any world where (in spite of N being told as fact) Gladstone is a bad person. Yet, since N is a typical Victorian novel, and Victorians generally regarded Gladstone as the epitome of virtue – we want to say that "Gladstone is a good man" is true in N.

In the face of such counter-examples Lewis refines his *Analysis* as follows:

> ϕ is true in fiction f, iff the counterfactual "ϕ would have been true if f were to be told as known facts" is made true by all possible worlds where all the overt beliefs of the community in which f is written and placed are true.

Once we consider the author's or the fictional narrator's "belief world", Russell's vipers *can* climb up a rope and clocks can strike in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (even though actually Romans did not have clocks). Even when it is amended in the above way, I hesitate to accept such a *possible*-world analysis (which depends on a notion of maximum resemblance with the actual world). It does not seem to work with fictions whose departure from a likely course of events is decidedly freakish unless they are blatantly self-contradictory. We are totally at a loss as to how to apply that criterion to a claim like the following: "The grin of the Cheshire Cat was seen by the executioner who saw its head gradually fading away." This must be true in *Alice in Wonderland*. But we cannot even start to compare a world where that part of the Alice story is told as known fact (perhaps there is no such *possible* world) with the actual world. Even bringing in Lewis Carroll's "belief world" would not help. Perhaps, Lewis would say that it is vacuously true. But, we don't normally think that Alice's world is mad enough to make *any*thing true in it. For instance, it is not true in the story that the Cheshire Cat left its "purr" behind.

Inconsistent fictions set up major hurdles not only for Lewis's account of truth in fiction but for *any* account. If contradictions hold true according to the text of a story, then, logicians shudder to think, everything in it would claim to be indiscriminately true. Lewis grapples with this problem in a postscript to "Truth in Fiction" and suggests the strategy of fragmentation. Instead of requiring that ϕ be true in *every* fragment of the story in order to be true in it (*the method of intersection*), he now requires – more liberally – that ϕ is true in the story if it is true in some fragment or other of the story (*the method of union*). Thus:

> It is true in the Holmes stories that Watson was wounded in the shoulder; it is true in the stories that he was wounded in the leg. It is simply not true in the stories that he was wounded in the shoulder and the leg both – he had only *one* wound.[22]

Inconsistent fictions would just not be closed under implication. With such a minor incongruence as Watson's war-wound, Lewis's method of union might work but one does not know what to do with such texts as the *Yogavāśistha* story which begins with:

> Once upon a time, in a city which did not exist, there were three princes who were brave and happy. Of them, two were unborn and the third had not been conceived.

With such stories which claim to present a world where, still, not just anything whatsoever is true — game (2) really becomes an almost independent game — rejecting the very basic logical conventions of game (1). Surely Lewis would not try to provide a theory for truth in *such* fiction. Perhaps such stories try to teach us that even the 'actual' world is as absurd as the worlds described by them!

Returning to more coherent stories, although Lewis never says that "Holmes" stands for a merely possible object or even that, although Holmes does not exist, he might have done, he seems to say something dangerously close. The by now well-known *argument from colossal coincidence* teaches us that even if in a possible world someone called "Sherlock Holmes" lived a life exactly matching Conan Doyle's descriptions, the name "Holmes" which is invented in this actual world for a fictional item cannot turn into a name of or be used to state known facts about that historical person in that possible world. It looks as if David Lewis does not bear in mind the full implications of this argument when he urges us to consider possible worlds where this very fiction is recounted as known facts.

Lewis carefully avoids commitment to the erroneous view that fictional statements describe possible worlds, or that to be true in fiction is to be true in some possible worlds. But his pivotal use of the notion of "those possible worlds where this very fiction is narrated as a known fact" shows his inadequate awareness of the important insight that, with the fabricated designations devised primarily for the native items of game (2), you could never – in any possible world – play a *bona fide* game (1). So there aren't any possible worlds where any pure fiction (however life-like) is told as a known fact – as long as the identity of the fiction is fixed by its being told *here* in our world *as a fiction*. Some other story-telling, matching word for word with this act of story-telling, might count as *history-telling* in another possible world. But as Borges's classic piece about Pierre Menard trying to write Cervantes' *Don Quixote* "word for word and line for line", yet writing an original twentieth-century novel, shows, that will not be *this* story. In finding out what is true within a certain elaborate narrative make-believe (especially when it is not explicitly narrated), we constantly imagine about what *could* have happened. The folk-semantic idea of the "world" of a particular game (2) is not coherently explicable in terms of the formalistic idea of possible worlds where this very game counts as an extension of real-world talk.[23]

In our philosophical conjectures about possible worlds, the minimum discipline is maintained by clinging to the actual history of the use of a name when the name

is hawked for reference from world to world. If the designator is non-rigid, the referents might change from world to world, but the designator itself cannot change its character. David Lewis militates either against the logical insight (to be elaborated in Chapter 6) that "Sherlock Holmes", as we use it now, is empty in *all* possible worlds or against the intuition that if a name is non-rigid in one possible world, then it is non-rigid in all.

In so far as Lewis accounts for the *actual* emptiness of "Sherlock" in descriptivist terms (i.e. nobody fulfilling a certain role determined by the sense of the name "Sherlock", etc.) and conjectures about its rigid referring role in other possible worlds in terms of some sort of causal theory of reference, his account of fictional names becomes an impossible mixture of the Russellian and Kripkean doctrines of proper names.

Finally, it seems to me that Lewis's amended truth-condition for fictional sentences is at heart as circular as the naive account rejected right at the beginning. Doesn't the notion of "a world where f is told as *known* fact" presuppose the notion of the *truth* of propositions expressed in telling f, via the concept of *knowledge*?

Even if we cannot wholly accept Lewis's counter-factual analysis of fictional truths, the exact manner in which talk inside game (2) is parasitic upon talk in game (1) becomes clearer as we examine his steps. When that dependence remains mysterious, e.g. concerning truth-decisions about F2 statements in the context of logically wilder varieties of fiction, to leave it like that might well be a virtue rather than a weakness of the philosophical account. Even in the game of world description, the winning, that is the truth-hitting moves are often difficult to decide. In a game of make-believe, where109 rules are so much more flexible, that truth will naturally often be beyond determination need not frighten us into accepting the position that in game (2) everything or nothing counts seriously as victory or defeat.

No satisfactory theory of truth in fiction can be reached until we can decide what it is that we are assessing for truth or falsity. Trying to look for the proposition embedded within the fictional operator "It is true in the fiction f that" – using possible-world semantics is, I think, ill-fated. Sets of properties could be looked upon as being what the author's original pretence is all about. But sets of properties are not happily called "true" or "false". I think the truth-bearers in the case of game (2) claims – indeed even for game (1) claims – are pieces of awareness. When I assert "Holmes really was a bit neurotic," I am evincing a special sort of awareness which I want my audience to share. Instead of prefixing the assertion with an "In the story" operator and then evaluating it for plain truth, I recommend keeping the claim unprefixed but conducting the process of truth evaluation itself inside game (2). But even inside game (2), who is this "Holmes" about whom the claim that *he* is neurotic is alleged to be straghtforwardly true?

NOTES

[1] There is an enormous literature by Sherlock Holmes fanatics who wrangle about the *correct* dates of and details about the events in the lives of Holmes and Watson. A good example is D. Martin Dakin's *A Sherlock Holmes Commentary* (1972).

[2] Cf Devine (1974).

[3] *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, in 2 volumes, edited by Baring Gould (Murray, 1968), Vol. 1, p. 376.

[4] O.N. Goodman (1978) *Ways of World-Making*, p. 104.

[5] J. Woods (1970) p. 14.

[6] The Indian philosophers of the Nyāya school had a partly Russellian and partly Fregean theory of meaning. They too gave an account of fictional statements in terms of our "*wish* to speak as if..." Our understanding of them is said to be a form of "simulated cognition". But they also extended the same explanation to cover metaphorical or figurative use of language, e.g. in formations like "Juliet is the sun." (See Appendix for further details.)

[7] Walton (1973) Sec. III.

[8] Radindranath Tagore: "The Pair" in *Ksanika*.

[9] Gregory Currie, while levelling more or less the same objections against Searle, makes this odd suggestion. See page 15 of his *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge, 1990). I think this is a mistake.

[10] I later on discuss some apparent exceptions to this. It is not impossible for Liz Taylor to act as herself in a fictional film about Liz Taylor. A co-actor in the film while pretending to embrace Liz Taylor would actually be embracing Liz Taylor. But even there, though the same movements would count both as pretending to do X and doing X, the two acts remain conceptually distinct in the same way as locutionary and perlocutionary acts which are distinct but performed simultaneously.

[11] Here, I think, Searle correctly criticises Wittgenstein for classifying *lying*, too, as a separate language-game. The entire reprehensibility of the act of lying rests on the presupposition that the liar plays the same game as the honest reporter but breaks a rule.

[12] Searle (1977) p. 236.

[13] We shall see later that the implied identification of the created character and the fictional person is inaccurate. The quoted passage also characterises the F2 standpoint as *outside* the story which is a mistake.

[14] See Dummett (1973) pp. 310–11.

[15] Walton. *Mimesis As Make Believe* p. 88.

[16] Currie *The Nature of Fiction* (1990) p. 51

[17] See Anscombe's paper "Pretending" (pp. 90–91) in *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*, 1981.

[18] In *Jacques the Fatalist*, Diderot often pretends that he does not know what happened in Jacques' life. And of course *Roshomon* is a classic testament of authorial agnosticism.

[19] We tend to think that Conan Doyle pretends to be Dr Watson. Actually, he is pretending that Dr Watson is saying these things. To think otherwise, as Lewis (1978) p. 40 seems to do, is to make "I" refer wrongly to Conan Doyle. See the distinctions drawn by Umberto Eco in his *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Harvard University Press 1994, chapter 1 pages 18–23) between the empirical author, the ideal author and the fictional narrator. Eco's work with its wealth of actual and possible examples of fascinatingly complex fictional worlds unsettles many of the modal logicians' formulations of the truth-conditions of fictional statements.

[20] Lewis (1978). "Truth in Fiction" and "Postscript" in *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. I.

[21] Whatever might be Lewis's own intention behind adding this last clause, it ironically commits him to the counter-intuitive decision that any remark about a fictional item is vacuously true, once we realise, thanks to Kripke, that if f is told as a true make believe in the actual world, f itself can never be told as known fact for all f's in any world.

[22] D. Martin Dakin, in his *Sherlock Holmes Commentary* (1972 p. 11), concludes that Watson actually had both wounds. So this is an easy example of inconsistency.

[23] See Currie (1990) pp. 62–70 for a detailed criticism of Lewis's account. One of his ingenious objections goes like this: suppose Doyle wrote in cynical understatements. The text would then *say* that Holmes was a rather ordinary intelligent fellow who was only by chance occasionally successful with his cases, while showing all his exploits just as we know them now. Worlds where a Holmes-counterpart is only marginally successful and has ordinary intelligence are not worlds which we would want to count as at all *close* to the story-world, yet the *text* will be true in them. Thus the notions of "What is true in fiction" and "What is true in worlds where the text of the fiction is related as known fact" fall apart.

CHAPTER 5

DEEPER TROUBLES WITH FICTION: REFERENCE, EMOTION AND INDETERMINACY

"But is the unicorn a falsehood? It's the sweetest of animals and a noble symbol. It stands for Christ, and for chastity; it can be captured only by setting a virgin in the forest, so that the animal, catching her most chaste odor will go and lay its head in her lap, offering itself as prey to the hunter's snares."

"So it is said, Adso. But many tend to believe that it's a fable, an invention of the pagans."

"What a disappointment," I said, "I would have liked to encounter one, crossing a wood. Otherwise what's the pleasure of crossing a wood? ... Still, it grieves me to think this unicorn doesn't exist, or never existed, or cannot exist one day." ... "But console yourself, they exist in these books ..."

Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, New York, Warner Books, 1984, pp. 379–81

5.1 THE QUESTION OF REFERENCE

In the previous chapter we have tried to explore ways of resolving problems concerning, first, the meaning and, then, the truth-value of fictive and fictional utterances.

Our policy regarding both these issues has finally been to keep as close as possible to the naive approach. Under the special game rules of fiction-making we assert and claim truth with the same force as in real-world talk. But about what, in place of the real world, do we make assertions in this language-game? In other words, what is there for Conan Doyle's (and, following him, our) use of "Sherlock Holmes" to refer to?

The reductionist pressures against the naive approach become heaviest with this question. We reach the point where description of actual linguistic practice can hardly stay uninvolved with metaphysics.

The orthodox Russell–Ryle view, rarely adopted today in unmitigated form, tells us that "Mr Pickwick visited Rochester" (S) merely *seems* to be about Mr Pickwick. A series of accusations of false appearance follows:

(a) S superficially *appears* to be true of Mr Pickwick. It is not, in fact, true or false of anything. In a sense, it is false of everything. But, then, S was not a proposition about everything.
(b) S only *simulates* singularness. It actually expresses a general judgement.
(c) "Pickwick" is really a definite description of the form "The person called "Pickwick" and having such-and-such characteristics." It only *masquerades* as a name.

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 111–141.

(d) "Pickwick does not exist" *only looks* like a predication. But no existence-ascription or existence-denial is a predication about an individual.
(e) Dickens only *pretends* to make reference to Pickwick but does not, thereby, actually refer to a pretend Pickwick.

These, (b) and (e), are sometimes defended by a confused appeal to the theory of definite descriptions:

If there is not such a mountain, the proposition "Mont Blanc is very high" is neither true nor false (although one of its *ingredient* propositions is false; namely, that there is a mountain called "M.B.").
Ryle (1933) pp. 242–5

Unless we regard the word *ingredient* as a slip, the above remark looks like a laudable but logically disastrous attempt to combine the common sense of Strawson with the elegance of Russell!

View (d) can hardly be put forward as a special thesis about *fictional* names unless we want to say that the logical analysis of existential statements depends upon their truth-value which is not a palatable consequence. We have seen, in some detail, how (d) fails as a general thesis about all existential statements (see Chapter 2). One can, of course, see why metalinguistic theories of negative existentials become even more attractive with fictional names occupying the subject positions. The occurrence of the name "Pickwick" must be given some kind of non-transparent non-referential account. Quotation[1] is one handy device. Orthographic accident is another.

Goodman (1961), who smartly chides Ryle for maintaining that "Pickwick fell" only seems to be about *Pickwick*, himself holds that the sentences in *Pickwick Papers* are simply *Pickwick-about.* Occurrence of the term "Pickwick" in the latter predicate is like that of "can" in "canine". His reasons for disagreeing with Ryle are interesting. First, "Pretence to refer to Pegasus" hardly provides a Pegasus-non-committal paraphrase. It still requires the existence of Pegasus in so far as it entails: $(\exists x)$ (S involves a pretence to refer to x); this is true, at any rate, in all pretence *de re* about putative objects of reference.

Second, "seeming to be about" is not quite the right complaint against the fictive sentences. It implies that some other statements could genuinely be about Pickwick – only these are not. The juggler's sentences "One, two three, eh! Missed a glass", misheard from a distance may *seem* to be about a certain real-life Mr Glass, or "Cambridge is beautiful" may seem to be about a city in England when it is actually about an American town. Fictional reference has got to be distinguished from such referential illusions. Goodman recognises that: "Some more satisfactory account must be given of the sense in which S is about Pickwick and not about Pegasus, Centaurs or Maine."

His own ingenious theory claims to do this, altogether avoiding any referring use of "Pickwick" by looking upon

"Pickwick laughs" is about Pickwick

as having a one-place rather than a two-place sentence skeleton. When a name does have a historical reference, e.g. "Lincoln" in "Lincoln was assassinated" (L), we can say the "L is about Lincoln" fulfils a two-place sentence schema, namely ϕ is about ψ – where there is a place for a real accusative to follow "about".

But, just as a picture of a hobgoblin is not really a picture of someone (it can happen to be so: for example a much disliked school teacher's likeness) but merely a hobgoblin-picture,[2] S might be merely *Pickwickabout.* We need not go into the details of how Goodman handles the immediate consequence – a sudden boom in the number of newly hyphenated predicate expressions (at least as numerous as the putative nonentities). He has to juggle, among other things, with the logical relation between "... is Maine-about" and "... is about Maine" when "Maine" *is* a referring expression. The apparent substitutability of, for example "Alyosha" with "the younger brother of Ivan", even when they occurr as allegedly inseparable parts of predicates such as" ... is Alyosha-about", cries out for an explanation too. The artificiality of this device apart, it concedes to Ryle the most disputable point that we cannot talk genuinely about an object unless it exists in the real world, thus expelling all wonderment as to whether *a* exists from the category of talk *about a.*

Russell's analysis, for all its awkwardness, at least did not suffer from discrimination: whether true or false, fictional or factual, involving an empty or a non-empty term, all statements involving ordinary proper names were robbed of their singularness, i.e. their being *about* the apparent particular subject. The analysis of a statement was not made contingent upon its own truth-value, or that of its presuppositions, or component existential proposition. But if we are not ready to go all the way to analysing away singularness in favour of existential generalities, we have no right to balk differentially at the singularness of fictional statements.[3]

Not only fictional names like "Pickwick" but even historical names such as "Plato" fail to meet Russell's austere standard of logically proper names: it requires current existence of a perceived name for the name to be "proper". Such an overstrict notion of "naming" perhaps sprang from a confusion between the two senses of that verb. In the first sense, "to name" is to get hold of something and confer a name on it. The second sense is to use an already current name of an object to speak about that object, which is not necessarily present or extant. Russell thought that a speaker could do the second thing only if he or she could do the first. He was clearly mistaken. I could not have named Jesus in the first sense, yet obviously I can name him in the second sense (as I just did). Even if I were to ask, "Does Jesus exist?" I should not be reducing his name into a definite description. In any case, treating fictional proper names as disguised definite descriptions is a useless strategy for quite independent reasons. As Greg Currie notices, it is monstrously false that the one-line fiction:

Jack got up in the morning and ate breakfast. THE END.

fictionally asserts that there was only one person called "Jack" who got up in the morning and had breakfast. Even in the world of fiction there may be lots of Jacks who did exactly those two things. Somehow the story-teller and the reader manage to focus on the same target of reference without having to achieve this via an existentially quanitified uniqueness of description-fitting.

What exactly in the case of pure fiction are these common focuses of attention which, as it were, need not be pasted to reality in order to be named? We will later

reject the view that these are abstract entities of literary criticism or existent characters. Could they be nonexistent pure objects?

Let us, at this juncture, consider the strongest charges against the Meinongian thesis that fictional proper names pick out mind-independent nonexistents. It is of course Meinong, as reconstructed by Terence Parsons, who will be attacked. The general structure of the argument is as follows.

(a) If, by our use of "S(herlock) H(olmes)" we have to refer to Holmes the nonexistent, we have to refer to whatever item Conan Doyle was referring to when he was using "SH", because *that* use of the name has been handed down to us by Conan Doyle.
(b) Conan Doyle can refer to Holmes the nonexistent either by virtue of its (the Meinongian item's) fitting all or most of the descriptions associated with "SH" or by virtue of the item's being at the source of the causal chain at the other end of which Conan Doyle's use of the name is found.
(c) The object Holmes cannot, however we might characterise it, be the unique object satisfying *the* set of determining descriptions associated with the name "SH".
(d) Being avowedly nonexistent, such an object can never actually occur at any point in the causal chain which also involves, as one link, a real-world utterance (by Conan Doyle or, subsequently, by us) of "SH".
(e) Therefore, the name cannot refer to Holmes the nonexistent in Conan Doyle's use; hence, it cannot refer to such a Meinongian object in our use which we derive from Conan Doyle's. Yet that entity is the only qualified candidate for the designatum of "SH". Hence, the name does not designate Holmes the nonexistent.

We cannot resist (a) unless we create a complete division between fictive and fictional discourse. It is a perfectly sound argument that someone who acquires his use of the name "Emma" by reading Austen's novel refers to no one by means of that name, unless the name, as it occurs in the novel, refers to someone. And the name in the novels refers to Emma the nonexistent, only if Austen could have the appropriate *de re* intentional attitudes towards Emma.

(b) is based on our present state of philosophical knowledge which offers the descriptivist and the causal theories as the only alternative theories of singular reference.

(c), the most interesting premise, can be proved in a number of ways. Let us discuss only two from Hunter (1986).

(c.1) When Conan Doyle wrote the first Holmes story, he could not have referred by "SH" to anything but the M(einongian) object which has those properties which Holmes has in that story. But that is either an object which also had other unspecified properties — in which case the story-specified set of properties is satisfied and "SH" becomes equally applicable to any one of an infinite number of objects whose sets of properties include the subset ascribed to Holmes in the first story (one recalls, here, the classic Kripkean question: *If one of them, then which one?*) — or else it is an object which has *just* those properties: in which case it becomes quite distinct from the M-object Holmes, who possesses just all the properties ascribed to him in the entire Holmes corpus. Agatha Christie might have written the first and the last Poirot stories at the same time, but that would not help because she could not write all the Poirot stories at once. Let us consider Conan Doyle, using the description "The M-object possessing all the *nuclear*[4] properties that I shall ascribe to an entity I call 'SH'". That might accidentally hook the right set of properties, but it might *not* as well. It is always imaginable that either in the Holmes stories or in some other story Conan Doyle writes after the initial Holmes story, he actually creates another character called "SH" who is a criminal and is quite recognisably not Holmes himself. His artificial meta-linguistic specification will now fit this namesake of Holmes and misdirect us as well as Conan Doyle.

(c.2) It seems plausible to hold that the precise M-object referred to by "SH" is determined by the set of properties ascribed to Holmes in the entire corpus. But this view has formidable Platonic consequences. Both Conan Doyle and the non-omniscient reader may then be said unwittingly to refer to the person who shot the Baskerville dog, even before the novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was planned, written or read. Let us try instead to be faithful to the intuitive idea of a gradual development of Holmes's career over a period of time. Then we shall have a series of M-objects called "Holmes" in a series of stories more and more affluent in nuclear properties, each successive one being a complement of the immediately preceding one. Conan Doyle can then go about designating the final M-object the "fullest Holmes", so to speak, by exploiting a foreknowledge of the form

> There is (to use a Meinongian particular quantifier) some unique object such that it is the completion of the series of all the Holmes of the stories, of which this one is the first

even when writing the first story. But, considering that we must allow Conan Doyle the power to make it happen at any nth stage of the series; that, at the next story H^*_{n+1} rather than H_{n+1} will be the completion of the M-object H_n; we must conclude that he cannot, even in this definitely descriptive style, rigidly have in mind precisely the M-object which is, in fact, picked out at the end of the series of stories. He cannot do this at any earlier point in the history of writing them unless, of course, on top of strict determinism, we attribute to him one sort of foreknowledge as to his own future choice of nuclear properties for his hero.

(d) is more clearly established. No one could have got hold of Holmes the person and said, "I dub thee 'Holmes'." The reason for this is not that since Holmes is unreal, he cannot personally be got hold of. No actually held causal theory is crude enough to require that the "dubbee" be necessarily physically present or perceived at the time of the hypothetical christening.

But the real dubiousness of a fictional dubbing is revealed by Kaplan in the following rather vehement language:

> Some rascal just made up the name "Pegasus" and he then pretended, in what he told us, that the name really referred to something. But it did not. Maybe he even told us a story about how this so-called "Pegasus" was dubbed "Pegasus". *But it was not true.* Maybe he proceeded as follows. First, he made up his story in Ramseyfied form as a single, existentially quantified sentence with the made up proper names ("Pegasus", "Bellerophon", "Chimera") replaced by variables bound to the prefixed existential quantifiers: second, he realised that the result was possible and that therefore it held in some possible

world, and that, therefore, there was at least one possible individual who played the winged horse in at least one possible world; and, thus, he tried to dub *one* of those possible individuals "Pegasus". But he could not succeed. How could he pick out just one of the millions of such possible individuals?

Kaplan (1973)

There can be dubious dubbings such as this one, "Suppose Mr X goes to Paris for a day. What should he visit? He should obviously visit the Louvre." No one takes the back-referring "he"-s as anything but (in this case presumably universally) bound variables. Should we succumb to the pressure of treating all fictional names as such variables with merely an additional vividness due to the wealth of details? My own answer is in the negative. Cinderella, in so far as she is someone, is not just *any one like* Cinderella.

Gregory Currie[5] takes fictional names in their fictive use as existentially bound variables or indefinite descriptions. The suggested singularness of reference to which Currie is sensitive is allegedly restored, in his account, by the uniqueness of this particular act of story-telling through which we can (fictionally) identify the very individual (from amongst hosts of other possible satisfiers of the "Someone who ..." description) whom the author had in mind. Yet, as Currie realises, it is not what Dickens, the real (game 1) author, tells which fixes the reference of the name "Pickwick" (because he does not, seriously, *tell* anything in those pages), but what the *fictional author* says which does. It is this fictional narrator who hands us down, in the story, the use of the fictional name introduced through an existentially quantified "Ramsey-sentence"! But how do we get to the intentions of this fictional author, after all? It seems Currie's picture is no clearer than my idea of conducting the whole search for a reference within game (2).

From the point of view of what I have called game (2), we can regard Conan Doyle (in F1 discourse) and ourselves (in F2) as tacitly participating in the plot of the story, not as people who live and walk about at the same time or in the same place as Holmes and Watson, but as posterity reading Watson's journals. Our reference to Holmes does, however, remain story-relative (in Strawson's sense)[6] in so far as it has to go via Watson's text. But now, "story" does not mean a fictional story *within* the fictional context because *Watson* is not merely imagining things but recording events that happen; "story" can be used in the journalists' sense of the term: namely, a certain report of a set of facts. Conan Doyle, no less than us, is a reader (maybe the first one) of what he believes (in game (2) Watson truthfully says about Holmes and his exploits. The F1/F2 distinction becomes redundant inside game (2) and Conan Doyle's reference to Holmes becomes as extensional as Watson's. Through Conan Doyle, we acquire our use of the name of Holmes from a friend of the detective. There is no obstacle to Holmes causally relating to Watson's use of the name "Holmes". Watson can refer to him in the most authentic fashion causally and/or descriptively. Inside game (2), the chain of reference for "SH" need not end in a block but can end in Holmes himself because the entire chain including *our* utterance of the name is drawn into the Holmes world, rather than some counterpart of Holmes being imported to ours. We pick up our reference to Holmes by reading Watson's journals, just as we pick up our reference to President Clinton by reading about him in the newspapers. We need not meet either of them personally to be able to talk singularly of them.

It is because we could not keep the inside/outside distinction straight that we floundered with an array of Meinongian Sherlocks or dubbings without dubbees. The question of reference can be raised only inside game (2), where Holmes does not exist-in-fiction (thus, we do without Searley subterfuges) or as an abstract blueprint or a set of unborn properties but exists, period.

Somewhat like London in the Holmes stories, we incorporate ourselves (less explicitly) into the game of make-believe; and make it fictional (this time the pretence can afford to be existentially *conservative*) about us that we are being told by a certain Dr Watson about a certain detective whom he had studied closely for a long time. Even the philosophical question "Can we refer to nonexistents?" has to be asked inside some game or other. Inside any ordinary game (1) through (4), it is to be answered in the negative (unless we mean by nonexistent *now nonexistent*). Inside the master-game (or Game *) we can answer "yes", but with the proviso that we do so only with a view to denying existence or asking existence-questions, but not for any other sort of predication.[7] Is "Sherlock Holmes" a proper name? Inside game (2): yes; inside game (1): no. In the master-game statement "Sherlock Holmes never existed": yes.

5.2 QUESTIONABLE CHARACTERS: CREATIONISM VERSUS PLATONISM

The view that by indulging in fictive discourse (F1) the author *creates* the objects (to whatever category they may belong) to which we refer in F2-type (or even F4) talk is here called "*creationism*". "*Platonism*" is the name given to the opposite view, which pictures the referents of fictional discourse (whether of F2- or F4-type) as timelessly there to be picked out, or, even if temporal, as at least existing (inside or outside fiction) independently of the author's writing about them.

Creationism, in its most commonsense form – the form in which it indeed looks like the fact of the matter rather than a mere "ism" – leaves it ambiguous as to what exactly is supposed to be created by the author. The word most unsuspectingly used is "characters". Yet, that word can be used with at least two radically different denotations in two different kinds of contexts. We talk of what this or that character did or said in a story at definite points of time in the story. We also talk of the characters being completely fictional, life-like or partially based on real historical persons or some other characters of earlier fictions. Surely, the entity which kills or lives cannot be the same as the one which is life-*like*. What sense does it make to say about some of our friends in real life that *they* are *based* on some others? Of course, their *characters* (this time in a specified sense which makes them distinct from the individuals they belong to) can be modelled on those of others. Indeed, characters in this sense may even be partly shareable among individuals. We shall come to this feature-based interpretation of "characters" in a moment. In order to appreciate the ambiguity of the expression "character of a fiction", consider a story I write in 1992 in which an ancient Egyptian scientist builds in 800 B.C. a huge thinking machine nearly as powerful as a modern computer. In the story, the machine is called "Tuarmesis". The story proceeds with the spectacular performances of Turamesis, which gradually supersedes its maker, and comes gradually to

show signs of free will, until people regard it as a divine oracle who finally brings about the scientist's doom. Now, we can ask: when was Turamesis created and who created it? The answer, in 800 B.C. by an Egyptian scientist, will place the question (together with the answer) in F2-type discourse and would clearly refute creationism. *I* did not create Turamesis. The answer, in 1992 by A. Chakrabarti, will tend to support creationism, but then it would be a sample of F4 talk. This latter answer speaks of a distinct entity – not the ancient oracular computer but, if you like, its character in the sense already sketched out.

Apart from the disparity in time coordinates, the distinction between characters and items becomes clearer through the asymmetry of our emotional attitudes towards them. We can say, for instance, that one cannot but feel fascinated by a certain fictional character because *he* is painted (so faithfully to life) as typically tedious. The solution of the paradox surely lies in detecting the switch from F4 to F2 talk. What one is fascinated by is an abstract entity of literary criticism which actually exists and is admirable as a work of art, like a symphony or a dance (namely, the character, or more accurately, the portraiture of it).

Corresponding to this, there is the other item which is nonexistent in the actual world, the fictional person who is available for reference only in what we have called game (2) and that person is boring. He bores his companions (call them – playfully – his fellow non-beings) in the world of the story and, in a special sense, bores us – not as a literary creation but as a person. The character is an *it*. The item is a *he*. And it is his character.

Now, creationism is obviously false if applied to the sort of entity *he* is. There are several obvious arguments for that. The argument inside F2 (hence, game (2)) would be that Jane Austen could not have created Emma because Austen was not God and Emma is not a man-made artifact. (Aren't many authors born much later than the people they fictionally, write about?) Emma was born of her parents, Mr and Mrs Woodhouse, and if any human beings can be said to have "produced" her, it is they. The argument outside game (2) would be that to create is to bring into existence, so that if Austen did create Emma, it would not now be true that she never existed.

The role of the author inside game (2) would be that of a reporter rather than that of an architect or creator. Like the historian or archaeologist who, by first informing us about a hitherto unheard of city or king, makes the city or the king *known*, the author of the fiction tells us, for the first time, about items which, depending on where he places his plot, existed, exist, will exist or (in case of certain untimed fairy tales) are there, independently of his act of writing about them.[8]

But surely, the author does create something! Something distinct, that is, from a series of ink marks on paper. Does he then create the abstract entities we are inclined to call "characters" in the stricter sense? Waiving, for the present, immediate worries concerning the awkwardness of creating an abstract entity, let us concentrate on the notion of a character – the sort of entities to which Kripke suggests that the fictional use of language commits us and which Peter van Inwagen (1977) has called *creatures of fiction* ("creature" suggests creation too!).

Van Inwagen almost fools us into believing that he is saying about the same fictional entities which we commonly regard as nonexistent that "every single one of them exists" (ibid., p. 299).[9] It becomes more deceptive and, in the final analysis, *incorrect*, when he claims that it is these existent entities which are named by fictional proper names like "Mr Pickwick". In terms of our own taxonomy, he takes F4-type discourse as the paradigm of straightforward verifiable talk about Mrs Gamp. Thus, he distinguishes between the properties that she really has and other properties which are merely ascribed to her in the story. Her own properties are:-

being a character in a novel,
being a theoretical entity of literary criticism,
having been created by Dickens,
being a satiric villainess, etc.

As to the properties she is said to have in the story, like being old, being fat, being fond of gin, etc, van Inwagen plays some ingenious logical tricks. He says that just as, for a Cartesian, the person Jones strictly speaking cannot himself have physical qualities like being six foot tall; although he is loosely said to have them, the character itself cannot have these personal (non-literary) properties. Indeed it is as impossible for a character to *be* (strictly) fond of gin as it is for an epic simile to be so. Yet, the statements that we make in F2 about Mrs Gamp have to be given some account. And van Inwagen proposes an "Ascription"-predicate which has three places respectively for the property, the creature of fiction and the literary context (a novel, a place in a novel, a story, a section of a story, a paragraph or even a sentence). Thus, the statement

Anna Karenina committed suicide

will receive the following analysis:

A (committing suicide, Anna Karenina, Chapter 31 of Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*)

The predicate $A(x,y,z)$ for various technical reasons is taken as a primitive. We could, of course, quantify over any of these argument places, issuing statements like

There is some character in every novel to which the property of being very passionate is ascribed.

or

"A particular property is such that in some novel every character is ascribed that."

Such an analysis has obvious advantages. It has immediate solutions for the problem of indeterminacy or incompleteness, as well as those of author-endorsed inconsistencies.

If in the first chapter of a novel, the author says that the heroine's apartment was in the ground floor and, in the tenth chapter, the heroine comes down from her flat by the lift, we need not be puzzled. We can simply intervene in the contradiction through the Ascription-predicate and rewrite the corresponding fictional statement as:

A (living in the ground floor, the heroine, Chapter 1) and A (not living in ground floor, the heroine, Chapter 10)

which is not reducible to the form "fa and $\sim fa$".

Equally, we do not have to say that some non-existent woman used to drink gin and puzzle about the possibility of drinking without existing.

Generally, as we have already remarked, this is the proposal to rephrase all F2 claims as F4 ones and thus get rid of Sherlock the detective in favour of Sherlock the literary creation, who is depicted as a detective.[10] Apart from the obvious artificiality of the proposal, it suffers from at least the following fundamental deficiencies.

First, it cannot provide any account of how F1 talk, which surely cannot make reference to abstract entities of literary criticism (because these entities evolve out of F4 talk), can serve as a ground for referring to them.[11] We have to honour the intuitive idea that we pick up our reference to Holmes from Conan Doyle's use of the name. We use the name Holmes for whatever entity he – in fact Watson himself – was using it for. Yet, Watson or even Conan Doyle was certainly not using it for a creature of fiction in van Inwagen's sense. About F1-type discourse, van Inwagen makes a Rylish remark: "Typical narrative or descriptive statements taken from works of fiction are not about creatures of fiction. They are not about anything" (van Inwagen, ibid., p. 307).

But if Dickens is not speaking about anything when he writes the story about Oliver, and we are speaking about whatever he is speaking about (when we say "Oliver was born an orphan"), then we are speaking about nothing as well. But this is false on *all* accounts of the matter. So, Dickens and we must be speaking about something and that something must be distinct from an abstract entity of literary criticism.

Second, in his enthusiasm to show how the Mrs Gamp that we talk about in literary criticism *exists*, just as numbers and plots do, van Inwagen has ignored the philosophically more interesting question of how she does not exist. He discusses the issue in his final footnote, confessing to its complexity, and comes up with a rather old-fashioned Russellian solution:

> The utterer of such a sentence ["Mr Pickwick does not exist"] would probably be expressing the proposition that ... nothing *has* all the properties *ascribed* to Pickwick.
>
> Inwagen, ibid., p. 308

This is easily seen to be wrongheaded. In the first place, if one takes "Mr Pickwick" as the name of a *man*, one would probably be more right than van Inwagen who takes it to be either the name of an abstract entity or not a name of anything at all. In the second place, the denier of Mr Pickwick's existence can very well admit that someone has (had) *all* the properties ascribed to Pickwick, by accident, and yet stick to the negative existential which is singularly *singular*.

By rejecting the thesis that "Mrs Gamp" in "Mrs Gamp was fat" refers to a character we need not, in fact do not, reject the insights

(a) that there are such abstract entities corresponding to fictional names; and
(b) that they are talked about both by us and literary critics when we issue statements like "Joyce created Bloom in the image of the Homeric hero".

In order to answer the question: did Tolstoy bring the abstract entity into existence? We first have to consider the nature of characters more closely and see in

what sense some other abstract entities like styles of architecture and techniques of painting or symphonies are brought into existence.

We have already seen how characters can be looked upon as types which persons exemplify, which can be said to belong to people. "She is of my type," the mother says about a favourite daughter. Formally, we can perhaps take person-types as sets of properties. This is what Carter (1980) suggests as a reconstruction of van Inwagen's creatures of fiction, although we are not eager to put the explanation to exactly the same kind of use. We can harmlessly say that the character of Mrs Gamp is *constituted* by or has, as a member, the property of being fat without making Mrs Gamp herself identical with the collection of her properties any more than I am a collection of mine. The character of a person (fictional or real) is, we may say, what it takes to be he or she. And it takes a certain uniquely exemplifiable set of properties to be an individual, to be sure. In fact, real entities can be said to have characters, too, in so far as each of them (at any given point of time) has a open-ended cluster of properties which may be said to constitute its type. Two real entities, however, can never have numerically the same type (if we include spatio-temporal determinations in the set of properties) because of the necessary discernibility of non-identicals, but they can share a major chunk of their common characteristics – at least for a certain length of time. The overlapping or intersecting set of their properties can be said to represent their common character.

With such an understanding *of* characters as person-types, we can easily say that fictional characters, e.g. characters of Professor Moriarty (note that here the "of" is not an idiomatic substitute for "namely" as in "city of London" but a strict "of") of Tom Thumb, of Long John Silver, etc. (person-type is too narrow in connotation; we have thing-types as well, e.g. the character of Tinderbox, or of El Dorado the country) are existent, unlike the items of which they are characters. Usually, nothing in reality fits such characters, although that is not at all what is reported by F3-type singular statements, which are not to be taken as speaking of characters anyway. Characters exist[12] because they are *bona fide* items of game (4). I think I have the support of Aristotle in construing *characters* as sets of properties. Notice his remark in the *Poetics*: "Character gives us qualities."[13]

Let us now face the question: are these item-types created by the author? In so far as they are clusters of *properties*, it doesn't sound right to say that they are. Yet there is some sense in which before Dickens wrote about him the character of Pickwick did not exist. Are we then to be creationists about characters? Assistance in answering this question might be received from the related problem about the sense in which the *Ninth Symphony* or Pointillism (as against particular performances of it or paintings done in that style) could be said to be *created* by Beethoven or Seurat.

Abstract entities form a very heterogenous flock. Some of them, like nation-states, seem to demand that we recognise their starting to exist at definite points of time. In his Locke Lectures Kripke seems to have been a creationist about fictional characters, bracketing them with abstract entities like institutions, which surely come into and go out of existence.

Kripke is conscious of the F2/F4 distinction and does not try to reduce the one into the other. But he holds that if nobody ever wrote the Holmes stories, the character of Holmes which now actually exists would not have existed. The character, like a political organisation, can be brought into being by certain acts of story-telling or writing by a human being. Upon this view, a character is not like a symphony which can have many performances to which it is related as a type to its tokens (one is not too sure as to what relation the symphony bears to the *score*, which is definitely written for the first time by the composer, although what we mean by creating a musical work is obviously distinct from the act of writing the score since it can be created in the head, etc.). It would be more like an association or church (≠ the building) which, though abstract, does not have *instantiators* falling under it. If we take characters as property clusters, creationism becomes much less plausible.

An abstract entity has a conceptual pull towards timelessness. As a personified (not *exemplified*) character comments ruefully in Pirandello's play, "A man must always die, even an author must always die; but a character lives for ever" (Act 1, *Six Characters*). Even if it is the character of a person who dies on the stage, in the story the character does not die. It is very difficult to see, for instance, how a symphony can go out of existence. Yet, normally we expect creatable things to be perishable as well. Everybody might forget how to play the *Ninth Symphony*; no buildings are nowadays built in the Buddhist cave temple-style. Yet that symphonic or architectural genre cannot ever be said to have become nonexistent. We can even call it extinct, in the sense that it has stopped being instantiated or satisfied by any individual, but not nonexistent like an extinguished flame.

Can't we say, in a similar spirit, that what Seurat did about Pointillism was to paint the first exemplifier of it? Does that detract from his credit as the "father of Pointillism"? I don't think it does.

A mathematical theorem is not created, but hit upon or discovered by a genius who constructs the first proof of it. To think that Beethoven, by writing out the score of the *Ninth Symphony*, discovered a timeless abstract entity of which all subsequent performances would be instances or exemplifiers, is to pay him no less a tribute than is paid by calling him, loosely, the creator of it.

Such abstract objects (some of which necessarily and timelessly exist) are our topics of conversation in game (4) and in F4-type talk. Some abstract objects like numbers do not have instances in space and time. They are easily recognisable as Platonic and timeless; whereas others like literary styles, artistic genres and musical compositions are very often confused with their temporal counterparts, their instances – pieces of writing, physical items like a canvas, events like performances.

We need not, therefore, be creationists even about characters or roles.[14] They, too, can be looked upon as Platonic entities which — to phrase it in what would strictly be an inaccurate temporal manner of speaking — *pre-exist* the author's writing about the items falling under them. What the author does by entering into fictive discourse is to make it fictional or make-believe that a unique item fits a certain character (usually with reference to a story-time), when, in fact, nothing actually does. The dangling individual kinds are grasped and made into characters by the author's so-called "creative use" of language.

However, characters even in this technical sense in which I use the word here, are unlike symphonies in at least two respects. First, they do not have many instances falling under them; like characters of real objects the complete character of a fictional item also cannot be shared and bears a 1–1 rather than a 1–many relationship to its instantiator (inside the make-believe). Second, in *fact*, i.e. in game (1), nothing instantiates a purely fictional character, whereas after the composer's act of bringing the symphony to light, hosts of musical events may start to instantiate it.

Blueprints, like other abstract entities, exist timelessly, because they are arbitrarily choosable sets of properties. The author chooses some of them which he usually believes to be – at any rate, *wholly* – unfulfilled by any actual item and pretends that they are fulfilled, that they are the characters of certain real people, things, places and events. To make it sound more tangible: what the author does is to confer *characterhood* upon some previously unthought of and untalked about person-types and thing-types. We can say that before an author's pretending that the blueprint $[\phi_1, \phi_2, \ldots, \phi_n]$ is answered to by the unique item M, the above set does not become a character. It remains merely a constructible property-cluster. The author makes it a character by pretending that M has it, when M actually does not exist. What we have called the stage-setting part of fictive discourse (if any part of a given story is so separable) is where the author selects the core or basis of the property-cluster which he will make into a character. The rest of the fictive sentences go on to enrich that set of properties, until at the end of the story or series of stories we get the maximal form. Even in that form, the character is, nevertheless, always (inside game (2) only part of the character of the item M who answers to it.

Shakespeare *created* Touchstone because he was the first person to pretend that a unique individual had the character that Touchstone (in the appropriate game (2)) had — not because he brought that character, those properties or their conglomeration into being; much less because he brought that court jester himself into some kind of a shadow of being. Am I being a Platonist about fictional characters, then? In so far as the properties which make up the character of Sherlock Holmes are concerned, I think Platonism is at least more plausible than creationism. But I do give the author his due credit for choosing the relevant property-cluster and for conferring characterhood upon it by pretending for the first time that such a property-set is (or was, etc) somebody's character when, in fact (i.e., in game (1), it is (or was, etc) nobody's. The name "Touchstone" refers to Touchstone the flesh and blood jester inside game (2) and also may refer to the character of Touchstone the abstract literary object inside game (4). In the master-game it refers to the nonexistent item picked out of game (2). It is failure to keep the inside/outside distinction straight that gives rise to vulgar Meinongism about nonexistent particulars bearing genuine properties and also to vulgar creationism about produced (and hence existent) abstract objects being ascribed inappropriate personal properties and such like.

Even Wolterstorff (1980), who seems to hold an anti-creationist view very similar to ours, fails to keep the inside–outside distinction *fully* in sight. Though he says, as I have, "If characters are person-kinds, then they *do* exist. ... But the author did not bring that kind into existence," and also makes the distinction, suggested here, between dangling *person-kinds* and those that have been given characterhood.

> Perhaps, though, a person-kind is not properly called a "character" until some work has been composed of whose world it is a component. Then it would be a mistake to think of *characters* as awaiting selection by some author. That would be true only of person-kinds. And then what could be said of the fictioneer is that he brings it about that what are not characters become such. (Wolterstorff, 1980, p. 149)

But to be thus creative is not to bring the character into existence. Neither is it to bring it about that the character has an example. His creativity lies in the freshness, the imaginativeness, the originality of his selection.[15]

This is all very well, but coming to analyse the role of fictional proper names he correctly recognises that in the inside-the-fiction discourse (at least in the author's own utterance), the names cannot refer to these Platonic entities. Instead of taking the step (which we have taken) of asking even the philosophical question about what the fictional name refers to inside the fiction, *inside the fiction*, he abides by the constraint of a Russellian sense of reality – the dictate of not admitting nonexistent referents – and decides that the fictional *referring* expressions are not *properly* referring, that they function like variables supported eventually by an introductory use comparable to that of a general term or an indefinite description (see Wolterstorff, 1980, pp. 149–63).

We have avoided this unnatural conclusion, which jars against our intuitive constraint that in F2 discourse our references of the use of fictional proper names must keep a continuity with the references of those names in F1 and that, in fact, we must be able to refer to whatever items are referred to by the fictional persons (not person-kinds) inside game (2) or the world of the work. We have to ask and answer the philosophical question: "*What does 'Sherlock Holmes' refer to*?" inside some game or other.

5.3 EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO FICTIONAL OBJECTS

Sometimes as a literary critic, one admires the character or, more accurately, the characterisation of a certain fictional villain *because* as an imagined participant of his world one hates him. Records of the latter sort of ground-level emotional reactions of real people towards fictional items have been classified as F6-type statements. Before we enter into a problem concerning F6 statements, we must caution ourselves against a mistake. Although in deciding what exactly is created we have talked of item-types being given characterhood by authors of fiction, it is not exactly those characters or person-kinds themselves which are always admired by the critic when, for example, their nonexistent exemplifiers are loathed. The object of the critic's admiration or dislike is also an existent abstract object which is most probably distinct both from the nonexistent item, e.g. the villain and its character (in the sense defined). Maybe it is *the portraiture* of that character which moves the critic. The character of a thrilling person may be dully depicted by a certain author. We get into fuzzier categories here — such as the author's act of depiction — the depiction as an independent abstract entity which is generated by that act, the depicted character, and the concrete individual who, the author pretends, exemplified that character when in fact no one did. Whatever it may be that people find beautiful or entertaining in watching or reading a tragic or terrifying play, it is not those sorry people or the calamities which befall them make-believedly. Love of tragedies is not sadistic or masochistic. Graver problems, however, persist: how can we fear and pity items which we know do not exist (or did not happen)?

To take Walton's[16] classic example. Charles watches a bloodcurdling movie about an all-devouring green slime. He says later that he was terrified of the slime. The problem arises not because we cannot existentially generalise out of such a true claim (namely "Charles was frightened of the slime") and say truly that there was something such that Charles was frightened of it. "To fear" and other emotional-attitude verbs are notorious for not allowing such existential exportation of their objects. Charles could be genuinely afraid of, or crave for, or rejoice at nonexistent things and events, *which he falsely believes to be real*, as much as he can dream of, or hallucinate about them. The problem arises because in the case in question (in typical F6-type contexts) Charles does not believe that the green slime exists. The puzzle, strictly stated, consists of the joint inconsistency of all four of the propositions below, all of which look initially plausible to common sense:

(a) $(\forall x)$ (x knows that P $\rightarrow$ x believes that P).
(b) $(\forall x)$ (x is emotionally moved by O $\rightarrow$ x believes that O exists).
(c) Charles is genuinely afraid of (i.e. emotionally moved by) the green slime.
(d) Charles knows that the green slime does not exist.

A solution may be attempted by dropping any of the four. The one most often left undisturbed is (a), and the one most often sacrificed is (c).

Let us quickly dispose of the shallower proposals first. One can argue that like avowedly irrational fears or gut feelings, which can coexist with intellectual certainty, about the unreality of the danger or relevant objects of feeling, our fear of fictional items is not counteracted by our knowledge of their nonexistence. That we are moved by such recognised unrealities is "just a psychological fact about ourselves which remains inexplicable at the level of rational discourse". This is to revise (B) in favour of:

$(\forall x)$ (x is *rationally* emotionally moved by O $\rightarrow$ x believes that O exists).

But Charles need not consider his fear of the slime with shame, as a lapse into irrationality. Being moved by the fate of Anna Karenina is a more intelligent and reasonable reaction to that novel than remaining stolid on the grounds that it is fictional. Even if we grant that one's reaction is at an unreflective "gut" level, it should be supported by a corresponding gut belief as well at that instinctive level.

Does our excitement and anxiety at fictional happenings involve us even in any such spontaneous momentary or half-hearted belief in the actuality of these

happenings? This is another suggestion which relies on a qualified rejection of (d) or on a mild attack on (a). Charles might be described as so intensely caught up in the fiction that he momentarily "loses hold of reality" and believes that the slime is real. This might be claimed to happen because he ceases to know that it does not exist or because his knowledge that it does not cannot prevent him from believing or half-believing it in a sort of self-delusive way. Such claims, as Eva Schaper (1978) convincingly argues, are based on peculiar compromises prompted by what she thinks is Coleridge's singularly unilluminating phrase: "*willing suspension of disbelief*". Unless we want to give up (a) (i.e. knowledge → belief), we cannot mean (in this context) by "suspending disbelief" either believing in what we know not to be the case or not believing in what we know to be the case. F6 statements can very normally describe fairly long-term emotional reactions which demand an explanation even if we admit that we do sometimes momentarily forget that what we are reacting to is fictional. We can be said to be sorry for Juliet and haunted by Dr Jekyll even when we are not "in the grip" of the play or story, not watching or reading it and in full awareness of their fictionality.

Several solutions have been attempted by challenging (c) instead. First, one might hold that what Charles is afraid of is the depiction of the green slime rather than the green slime that is depicted. Aren't we moved to tears by the novel itself? And the novel we *do* believe (rightly) to be real. True, sometimes we are so affected by the representation itself rather than what is represented. But to recall the distinction that we made at the outset, this reaction is not what we are concerned with. Rembrandt's *Blinding of Samson* is superbly beautiful. What it depicts is macabre. The picture as an art object moves us favourably. But there is an opposite feeling not towards the existent canvas or an existent reproduction of it but towards the Biblical subject of the painting, an event which we do not need to believe ever happened. Horror movies are loved because what they show is feared. The *movie* is not what is normally feared (except, maybe, by a cardiac patient). Second, it could be suggested a bit more subtly that what Charles is afraid of is not that particular slime, which he knows is unreal, but *some such* slime which he believes may be actual. Such a suggestion can be fleshed out in different ways. We often explain our reactions in terms of wondering what it would be like if such things happened, and happened to us. Boruah calls this "envisagement aided by empathy".[17] This again is to be admitted as a genuine fact about our psychological reaction to fiction, but a fact which is distinguishable from and which does not fully capture or account for the fact that we shed tears at Desdemona's own agony and feel excited at the most recognisably improbable adventures that our fictional heroes go through. We are not moved merely by the thought of their anticipated *resemblance* to reality.

Finally, one can simply deny that Charles is genuinely moved. If he was, he would have fled the cinema hall, would have tried to protect himself from, and warn others about, that danger. Walton seems to take something like this as his starting point by calling Charles's mental state "quasi-fear". Quasi-fear is not actual fear. Real fear may or may not even be a component of it. Walton's reliance on (b) and (d) seems for him to outweigh the case for (c). Thus he remarks,

> The fact that Charles is fully aware that the slime is fictional is, I think, good reason to deny that what he feels is fear. It seems a principle of common sense, one which ought not to be abandoned if there is any possible alternative, that fear must be accompanied by, or must involve, a belief that one is in danger. Charles does not believe that he is in danger, so he is not afraid.
>
> Walton, ibid., pp. 6–7

In fact, Walton's proposal is a lot more sophisticated than just that the fear is illusory, or that the reaction is not genuine. But before proceeding to embrace a view similar to his in terms of our familiar language-games let us consider two strong alternatives.

5.31 Are the Feelings Directed at Non-subsistent Pure Objects?

Taking either a free logician's or a Meinongian approach, we can hold (as Eva Schaper seems to do) that we need not believe that Othello existed in order to believe (and, hence, for example regret) that Othello was jealous of Cassio. Since the latter sort of belief is all that is required to feel emotionally about, say, Othello's unfounded suspicions and since that belief is not incompatible with the knowledge that Othello does not exist, the paradox vanishes. Strictly speaking, this solution rejects (b) in its present form, but it can embrace all that we might need to accept of (b) by revising it as:

B') $(\forall x)$ (x is afraid, happy or anxious that a is $\phi \rightarrow x$ believes that a is ϕ)

Don't we commonly hold that beliefs of the following two sorts are quite compatible?

(i) Richard III has just now ordered the gruesome execution of the Princes of the Tower.

(ii) There is no Richard III on the stage now, and nobody there has actually commanded anybody's execution.

Schaper calls the latter first-order, and the former second-order beliefs and maintains that unless one confuses the two orders, there is not only no reason to think that they clash, but rather that, in a characteristic way, the second-order beliefs are *based* on the first-order ones. We properly understand what goes on in a fiction by holding *de dicto* beliefs about fictional items only when we recognise that such beliefs do not commit us to the real existence of the items referred to within the fictional framework.

> It is only when they are supposed to have such commitments that these logically suspect and intuitively implausible views arise, which attribute to the person moved by fiction either total confusion ... or amazing gullibility.
>
> Schaper (1978) p. 29

Such a position is based on a very controversial theory which tries to dissociate the notion of identificatory reference and truth-claim from that of existence-assumption. The position is, nevertheless, extremely appealing and appears to solve our puzzle with minimum disturbance to the initial quartet of assumptions. But a harder look reveals that, like all those logicians who are enthusiastic about truth

without denotation, Schaper herself was suffering from a confusion of levels. She was right that we do not need to believe that, Anna and Vronsky were actually, real in order to believe, *fictionally*, that they loved each other. But she does not provide any clear account of why even to be moved *really* by their misfortunes, we do not need any more than the belief that *fictionally* they suffered. Schaper seems to say that since *a* is f can be believed without believing that *a* exists (which is too controversial to be taken for granted), we can believe that Anna loved Vronsky, as it were *tout court*, without any pretence operator along with our belief that Anna did not exist. She seems only too zealous to maintain that the emotion that we feel is situated very much in the actual world, while the object of the emotion, though nonexistent, bears sentimentally evocative properties and performs exciting actions. Since we can solve the puzzle without venturing such outrageous hypotheses as being thrilled by the real actions of unreal doers, we should eschew such a view.

5.32 *Is Desdemona a Part of Fregean Sense?*

We can reject (c) from the puzzle-generating tetrad above, in a sophisticated manner, not by denying that we are *really* moved by the green slime but by denying that we are really moved *by* the green slime. Taking clues from a nice distinction between "A is frightened by B" (which allows "(∃*x*) (A is frightened by *x*)" and "A is frightened of B" (which does not allow any corresponding quantification, although "B" would be one of the descriptions under which A identifies what he is frightened of) Peter Lamarque (1981) follows up this line of thought.

When a real murderer chases Charles, he is both scared of and by that killer. When it is a fictional murderer, he is afraid *of* him but frightened *by* merely the *thought of* him. Fictions and plays convey thoughts which affect us strongly because they come in well-developed bodies. No actual or believed danger needs to be associated with the entertainment of the thought in order that it might be frightening; and that is why likelihood of actual personal involvement is not relevant for the emotional impact of the thought. Walton cannot agree that Charles is really afraid because by "fear", he means fear about oneself. Charles cannot be frightened, according to Walton, without fearing that he himself is in danger. He can, however, be frightened by the thought of the slime devouring a particular fictional heroine or city or everything in the world of fiction. It may be as impossible for us genuinely to sympathise with Desdemona, the flesh and blood fictional woman, as it is for us to go and tell Othello about his mistake. But Desdemona might enter our world not as a person, not even as an imaginary person, but as a Fregean sense or type-mode of presentation. We might develop Frege's doctrine of indirect reference to the senses in intentional contexts and treat "In the play/story ..." as a variant of such contexts. Thus, the name "Desdemona" in the following occurrence can refer to the common cognitive content — the cluster of descriptions "appropriately derived from those offered in the play" (Lamarque misleadingly calls it a psychological object which will tend to posit private Desdemonas for each of us): "I feel sorry that in the play Desdemona is unjustly suspected of infidelity." Lamarque confesses that the above account needs a great deal of filling out. For instance, we must not recognise thought of any old *x* satisfying the content of a set of descriptions as thought of Desdemona. There must be a causal route back from that thought to Shakespeare's play. The identity of that particular play must come in somewhere in the genetic history of that thought. Such problems apart, the view incorporates the insight that reflections on jokes about real or imaginary people seem to yield, namely we can have emotional reactions to a thought independently of accepting it as true of this world.

The ideas are familiar to us. Treating fictional names as referring to their own sense (since they have no reference to stand for) and treating fictional statements as expressive of unjudged thoughts are not absolutely fresh strategies. Here too, in Lamarque, we have an analogy of playing a game without any motive of winning or scoring. The suggestion has obvious tempting features. But it finally fails to account for our objectively referential and assertive stance inside the game of fiction where winning and losing are as important as in the game of world description. Thoughts and senses, after all, are either dubious Fregean entities, populating an objective third realm or they are too private to be common targets of sentimental attitudes of several readers and spectators. Frege would not have been happy with the suggestion himself, as we can gather from the last paragraph of *Der Gedanke* where he discusses the question of whether thoughts can themselves influence our actions. Thoughts are held by Frege not to be *Wirklich*; it is only our apprehension of them, or the act of taking them to be true, that can goad us into activity or emotion. He would rather say that it is a mock assertion of a mock thought that moves the reader of a fiction than that he is really moved by an unasserted thought or by a group of them (such effectiveness would make thoughts *Wirklich*!). But the acts of apprehension of mock assertion are, after all, private. I could not appreciate so completely what you putatively felt when you announced, "I cannot but feel sorry for Shylock", if Shylock was for you just a part of your thoughts. Unless we assume publicly available thoughts as some sort of intentional entities – entities at least as dubious as nonexistent objects — we lose the *shared* reference of all F6-type statements involving the same fictional items across many different appreciators.

Walton's account is based on an analogy with a children's game of make-believe in which truths about certain props in the game generate make-believe truths about imaginary objects. Charles is playing a game of make-believe in which the images on the screen are props. Certain physical facts about those images make it fictional that a green slime raises its head and slowly oozes towards us, and certain mental facts about Charles make it fictional that he is threatened.

Working on the basis of careful distinction of scopes of the make-believe operator, this account can very elegantly solve puzzles concerning our ambivalent attitudes towards fictional plots and events. We seem sometimes to wish both that the hero should come out victorious (because we like *him*) and that he should not (because we dislike stories with typical happy endings). The tension is easily solved by noting that while it is make-believe that we want the hero to win, we

actually want it to be make-believe that the hero does not win. Similarly, the little girl wants to hear, and enjoys the suspense of, the same story repeatedly because while she may know that subsequently in the story make-believedly M rather than N happens, make-believedly she does not know and so waits breathlessly to see whether M or N happens.

I cannot agree with Walton's account in connection with the more fundamental issue of meaning and truth-claim because under the make-believe operator the truths under his interpretation seem to be at bottom merely existentially quantified. They fail to capture the unique singularness which F1- and F2-type talk admits of.

But we can accept one fundamental insight from him on this issue, namely that F6 statements are also made inside game (2) and are founded on a reader's self-incorporation into the world of fiction. Just as we tolerate non-serious mention of some items of game (2) while playing game (1) in what I have called F5-type hybrid statements (e.g. "Holmes would have solved the Watergate mystery in a matter of weeks"); in F6-type statements, I think, we should construe the real reader or spectator (to whom the emotion is ascribed) as taking part in the fictional world of game (2). The author already enters the world of fiction in the role of anonymous chronicler of facts. The readers, too, can take the implicit role of being (fictionally) told about what actually happened at sometime, somewhere in the world. We could easily go a little further and

> Rather than somehow promoting fictions to the level of reality, we, as appreciators, descend to the level of fiction.
>
> Walton (1978b) p. 21

We can feature as ourselves in the game of pretence where Sir John Gielgud might be playing the role of Richard III and, thus, playing the same game, we can be (inside the game) genuinely moved by Richard III's ruthlessness. Our position, thus, may not simply consist in denying that Charles is *really* moved but in rejecting that, Charles, *as threatened by the fictional slime*, knows (correctly believes) that the slime does not exist. Far from mistakenly believing in the slime or forgetting, for the time being, that the green slime does not exist, he correctly believes that the slime does exist because all of this, including the belief and the fright, is happening inside game (2). We could not even disbelieve in *its* existence unless we partly participated in game (2) in which alone *it* is available for reference. That is why we cannot say in game (1) that Charles is really afraid of the slime, and that is why Charles does not behave in the real world like a normal frightened person. F6 truths belong to game (2), in which Charles enters mentally and while he describes himself as having been afraid, etc., verbally, though not physically.

I used to feel tempted to treat statements like "Ernest Jones finds out the reason for Hamlet's delay in avenging his father's murder" as virtually game (2) statements with Ernest Jones as a game (1) guest. Depending, however, on the nature of the claims made by the psychoanalyst, we might sometimes have to regard his statements as straightforwardly about characters as game (4) items or on a par with F5 statements deserving a David Lewis sort of counterfactual analysis in terms of possible worlds. If, of course, the psychoanalyst's stance towards fictional individuals is like that of the person who genuinely feels about the precise fictional individual rather than about just anyone of its kind, then it is better to treat his statements as well as our description of his 'therapeutic' activity involving the fictional items as belonging to game (2), like F6 statements. Except for F3 statements, which compel us to walk across the boundary between games (2) and (1), we shall do well to listen to Walton's advice not to accept cross-world interaction if we can help it. Where we shall have apparent mention of items from both games, we should try to weigh the pragmatic evidence to ascertain which references cling more tenaciously to their home games and then force the entire statement into the relatively dominant game.

5.4 THE REMAINING MISCELLANY: INCOMPLETENESS OF FICTIONAL OBJECTS

The second puzzle against which Russell (in *On Denoting*) tested the strength of his thesis that denoting phrases do not denote in isolation was the one concerning the present King of France's apparent violation of the law of the excluded middle. His example was somewhat cunningly chosen, because, as far as we know, he did not have in mind any particular work of fiction which mentioned such an anachronistic character. Suppose we have such a story and it does not leave any clue for us to decide whether its king of France in the early twentieth century was bald or not. We could not forgive this indeterminateness of the fictional monarch by appealing to unanswerability of questions like

> "Is the House of Commons bald or not bald?"

because, unlike the H of C, a human being (which is after all what any story-king has to be in a story) *is* the right sort of entity to have or lack properties like baldness. The failure of truth-value cannot be explained by a category mistake. It would also not be appropriate to answer questions like

> "Did Sherlock Holmes have a mole on his back?"

by seriously pleading *ignorance*, as we can most legitimately do about

> "Did Henry VIII have a mole on his back?"

Real particulars show such an exhaustible wealth of properties that they are conceived of as capable of having unthought of or unknown properties. For any pair of complementary non-fuzzy properties ϕ and not-ϕ, an existent object which falls within the applicability range of ϕ must actually possess either property, whether or not we do, or can, know which it really does possess. This is the ontological counterpart of the logical law of bivalence, in terms of which any minimal claim of objectivity is usually made. Any theory of fictional objects which intends to treat them as objective targets of reference has, therefore, to come to terms with the apparent flouting of the law of bivalence by fictional entities. It is not that we need to go into a stupendous amount of research to find out from the text of the Holmes stories whether Holmes really did or did not have a mole. It is not that

Conan Doyle knew but suppressed this, nor that even he did not *know*. Unlike an actual detective, Holmes could not possibly hold back any personal secret from his "creator". He seems ontically neutral to these mutually exclusive alternatives.

The truth-value of the statement to the effect that he has such a mole is not, therefore, undiscoverable; it simply does not exist. Holmes is exhaustively determined by the descriptions given by Conan Doyle. Since these descriptions (together with the fictionally permissible incorporations from outside) form a finite list, he is bound to be incomplete as an entity. This led Meinong to the classic view that only (and all) existent objects are complete. Since completeness entails occupation of a definite position in each of an infinite number of bipartite lists (e.g. a list of things which are bald and those which aren't), we can never finish knowing all their characteristics; real particulars are complete because a description of any of them cannot be completed. With incomplete objects like the golden mountain (of some particular fairy tale), we can complete our survey of their features because they have only a handful of them.

It is too late for us to endorse Russell's solution that there is no truth-value gap because both "The ϕ is ψ" and "The ϕ is not ψ" are false in so far as the empty definite description "The ϕ" introduces a false existential component into the sentence. On the contrary, we have already agreed to regard the author-endorsed statements (even the author's own) such as "Holmes smoked a pipe" (where "Holmes" occurs primarily) as *true*, in its appropriate game. It seems, therefore, that we have only the following alternative ways of dealing with the logically irksome fact that Santa Claus (who surely has a pair of feet and feet normally have some definite size) neither wears size ten shoes nor does not wear size ten shoes – even fictionally.

Picking up a line of thought we have dismissed at the outset, we might hold that for Santa Claus the question of wearing or not wearing size ten shoes is as much beside the point as the question of being blue or not blue is for a complex number. This is the view which would be adopted by anyone who looks upon Santa as an abstract entity like a number. We can be misled to such a view by confusing, for instance, Santa with the class of properties ascribed to him or with the portryal of his character. Once we look upon Holmes as an abstract literary entity of the same category as *catharsis*, both the sentence "H has a mole on his back" and its contradictory would be as ill-formed as "Catharsis has a mole on his back". There would be no breach of the law of excluded middle because we can make a distinction between properties which Holmes the literary entity actually has or lacks, for example the property of being discussed by Terence Parsons and those others which are merely ascribed to it in the text. Although Holmes is bound by the law of bivalence either to have or lack the property of *being created by Dickens*, Conan Doyle is not so bound to ascribe to him either the property of having or that of not having a mole. Although not having ϕ is, for standard logic, having its complement not ϕ, not ascribing a property ϕ to an entity x is *not* by any logic ascribing not ϕ to x. Thus, this alternative seems to solve the problem of incompleteness of fictional objects by first maintaining that they are abstract and then showing that they need not really have or lack any of the ordinary personal properties which are indirectly associated with them. We have already examined and rejected this account of fictional entities. Even as a solution of the present problem it is a rather cowardly one. It commits all our alleged F2-type truths to falsehood in the stricter sense. "Holmes smokes a pipe" is retained as true in an artificial fashion by twisting or glossing it as "The story ascribes smoking a pipe to the abstract creature of fiction, namely Holmes". Creatures of fiction overcome the defect of incompleteness, upon this theory, only by *lacking* all the properties that are *ascribed* to them in this technical sense. Since even the literary critic does not confine his attributions about Shylock to repetition of what Shakespeare literally says, one can quite naturally wonder whether Shylock observed this or that Jewish ritual, even if Shakespeare is silent about them.

The theory also suffers from the defect that it either makes Tolstoy's own statement about Anna "not about anything" or at best about something quite distinct from the subject of the F2-type talk. If we have to retain any *continuity* between F1 and F2 regarding reference of singular expressions, we have to reject the abstract-entity solution to the puzzle of incompleteness.

Alternatively, we can appeal to two sorts of negation and, hence, to two ways of forming negative or complement properties. This is what Meinong did by distinguishing between an object having the property of non-baldness and it being false that it has the property of baldness. To make it sound less preposterous, Parsons talks about *nuclear* negation as a special variety of property negation. A property q is said to be the nuclear negation of a property p just in case existing objects have q if they do not have p. Non-baldness is the nuclear negation of baldness because an existing object has it just in case it does not have baldness.

This serves several purposes. It also shows us a way out of the apparent mystery concerning the over-completeness, i.e. possession of incompatible properties, of nonexistent objects. A nonexistent object is not only free to lack both a property and its nuclear negation (because, by definition, lacking a property does not, for an object as such, entail having its nuclear negation) but is also allowed to possess both of them. Thus, Routley remarks.

> Meinong's round square is ... both round and square and so has the properties of roundness and non-roundness ... the law of contradiction according to which no proposition is both true and false is not thereby violated, because internal negation does not imply external; in particular that x is nonround does not imply that it is *false* that x is round.
>
> Routley (1973)

There are technical and formal distinctions between Routley's and Parson's methods of bringing out the non-equivalence of "a has not-ϕ" and "It is false of a that it has ϕ." These niceties are not relevant for our purposes. I am also not sure how essential it is for us to try to accommodate round squares in so far as fictional discourse is concerned. An author-endorsed contradiction is usually treated as an aberration in realistic fiction. Metaphysical impossibilities like the grin without the cat or some fictional events like someone squaring the circle, etc. might demand

some relaxation of logical laws. In general, however, the problem of incompleteness or of apparent violation of the law of the excluded middle seems much more interesting from the point of view of giving an account of fictional truth and reference. *All* fictional items are indeterminate regarding numerous pairs of properties, whereas very few possess inconsistent pairs of them.

Apart from the fact that the distinction between nuclear and extra-nuclear negation is artificial and *ad hoc*, there seems to be a graver reason for finding Parson's formulation of it unsatisfactory. The definition of nuclear negation tells us only what it is for an *existent* object to have the new nuclear property, namely the nuclear negation of p (if we know already what it is for something to have p), but is does not give us any idea of what it is for a nonexistent to have such a nuclear property. We are told that a nonexistent object can be bald in the same way as an existent one. We know what it is for an existent to be bald, by observation. We also know what it is for an existent to be non-bald, because that coincides with the condition of its being false that it is bald, but we are never told what it is for a nonexistent to be non-bald. We need to be told this separately because we are specifically reminded that for a nonexistent, being non-bald is not at all the same thing as just not being bald since, characteristically, such an object can fail to be both.

In fact, the above device is just a clever way of saying what Meinong said in so many words: the law of the excluded middle breaks down in the case of nonexistent objects. As Findlay points out (1963), p. 161), we can either abide strictly by the law of the excluded middle for all objects, real and unreal, complete and incomplete alike, and secure this by distinguishing between a wider and a narrower sense of negation; or we have only one sense of negation (which makes "*a* lacks p" ≡ "*a* has not-p") and confess that the law of the excluded middle is not obeyed by incomplete objects.

Another technically impressive way of maintaining the latter view is to say that fictional discourse involves us in a *many-valued logic*. We shall not discuss these proposals which, notwithstanding their undoubted importance in formal logic, do not reflect our natural manner of thinking and talking about fictional items.

A well-known method of restoring bivalence for an apparently recalcitrant set of statements using non-denoting items is to introduce an operator which will make all indefinite propositions false. To take Smiley's (1960) operator "t":

> The value of the sentence tA will be T if the value of the sentence A is T, otherwise it will be F.

This is not that artificial. In natural language we have the qualifier "It is true that" which lumps all statements that we do not want definitely to call true together with falsehood. We can try something similar by replacing t by "it is true in the story that".[18] Suppression of such qualifiers is not very uncommon. In discussing Plato's views, we might say "The forms are self-predicational" when we simply want to say that they are so according to Plato.

All our fictional, i.e. F2, claims can then be looked upon as elliptical for claims such as "It is true in the story that Holmes had a brother." This will make all apparently indeterminate statements such as "Holmes had a mole on his back" false because it is simply false that in the story the above is true. We shall, of course, have to resort again to the non-equivalence of

(a) "It is true in the story that Holmes did not have a mole", and
(b) "It is not true in the story that Holmes had a mole"

for, we want (a) false and (b) true. This is, in fact, more plausible with "in the story" than with the straight operator "it is true that" because the latter, at least in natural language, tends to preserve the same truth conditions as those of the embedded sentence.

Tempting though such a solution may look, it has several hazards. First, it too creates a chasm between F1 and F2. F1 truths surely cannot be regimented in terms of "It is true in this work of fiction that ...", not only for fear of self-reference but because the story-teller does not usually tell us within the story that he is telling a story (although he can tell us so in the pages of the same volume). Second, it is almost impossible to develop a satisfactory formulation of what Woods calls *the author's say-so conditions*, which govern the "in-the-story"-operator. F2.2 statements have to be determined for truth-value. Yet, the boundary between these and the ones which we shall need to recognise as indeterminate, hence *not true* according to the story, is elusive.

This suggests that some degree of indeterminacy should be accepted rather than eliminated through such formal devices or the detection of ellipsis. Going back to our favoured picture of the language-games, we want to do this at two levels. Inside game (2) Holmes is as much of a real person as even Conan Doyle. The author has not created *him* (as we have already clarified) any more than Gibbon created Nero. To be faithful to the simulation of game (1), on the basis of which game (2) is played – we must say that if Conan Doyle does not tell us whether Holmes had a mole or not, he either does not know or does not bother to mention it. Inside the game of make-believe, Holmes is as complete an entity and as capable of having unapprehended properties as Paddington Station. His determinateness and his existence are equally essential parts of our pretence concerning him. Like the incompleteness of the knowledge of an historian concerning his object of study, gaps in Watson's or the narrator's knowledge of Holmes's characteristics can easily be accepted, as long as we remember that we are in the relevant game (2).

At a different level, we must admit that there is a certain distinction between game (1) items and game (2) items. The former exist and bear properties whether or not we talk about them; the latter do not, except in so far as we discuss read, think and write about them. Thus, just as in the master-game we can make the absolute claim that Holmes does not exist, we can also take the absolute decision to withdraw both a property and its contradiction from Holmes (when ascription of neither has any place in any game whatsoever). The master-game alone can recognise the incompleteness of a nonexistent fictional item because to recognise *that* is to recognise its nonexistence.

5.4.2 *How Do Nonexistents Bear Properties? Do They?*

One does not make oneself a bit "realer" by crying, admonished Tweedledee, because if you are unreal, so would be your tears. While worrying about jejune questions like whether Holmes figures in the list of men with a mole on their backs or in the complementary list of those without, we have tacitly assumed that he definitely does figure in the list of people who smoke a pipe and in the list of people who know no philosophy. But how serious is that? Is the list of pipe smokers partly constituted by real and partly by unreal elements? Or, is the property of smoking a pipe which is attributed to Holmes a spurious version of the corresponding property which can be attributed to real people? Does any property really belong to Holmes? I feel that there is something wrong with these *questions*. Holmes is, as it were, bound to have all and only those properties which Conan Doyle says or implies he has. Now, we can be Platonists or empiricists[19] about Holmes himself, the fictional item – the imagined bearer of properties.

Meinong, it seems, was a Platonist. For any group of properties, he tells us, some object has all those and only those properties. This makes room not only for people and places imagined by writers and readers of fiction which are fairly richly endowed property-wise, but also for such poorly provided nonexistents like *the golden mountain* (the object such that it has only this pair of properties) or *the most outstanding desk I can imagine*. To this, of course, Parsons adds the most important supplementary principle that no two objects can have the same set of properties. This is supposed to allay the fear of failing to distinguish the nonexistent fat man in the doorway from the equally nonexistent bald man in the doorway. Nonentities so tightly defined seem to transcend our recognition of them (through imagination, picture-watching, dreams, hallucinations or understanding fictive speech) just as much as existent entities do. Do we want to say about Holmes that he would have smoked a pipe whether or not Conan Doyle had written about him? Empiricists[20] would deny this. Conan Doyle had not discovered but invented the pipe-smoking detective. We have already pointed out difficulties in this view. The issue, however, is terribly tangled.

If we agree with the Platonists, then we face problems like the following:

(1) If X is an unreal object and Y is a real object, yet the defining descriptions of X (which are the only sure clue to its properties) include the property of ϕ-ing Y, then X really ϕ-s Y. But that should entail that Y is really ϕ-ed by X. How can bearing a certain relation to an unreal object be an objective feature of a real object? Appeal to intentional verbs which tolerate non-actual *objects* would not help because we are also concerned here with the possible vacuity of the *subject* of the verb. If Holmes admired Newton, does Newton have the property of being admired by Holmes? The Meinongian objectivist usually distinguishes between two types of properties. Those such as "fascinates" or "is created by" stand for external relational predicates which are not true of nonentities necessarily. The fact that a certain child imagines the golden mountain does not add *being-imagined-by-that-child* to the list of properties of that mountain. It is only regarding

non-intentional nuclear properties that the Meinongian holds that they really and essentially belong to non-entities which are defined over them.

(2) The gravest problem arises with nonexistents which include "real" or "existent" in their defining set of properties. Meinong is staunch in his belief that the golden mountain is golden because it is defined as such. But what to do with the existent golden mountain or the really existing golden mountain? There are various ways of understanding Meinong's apparently inconsistent position that *the golden mountain which exists* but that it does not really exist.

We can add a fiat to the principle that an object which is defined as having any property ϕ actually has the property ϕ whether it exists or not, namely that "ϕ" should not be replaced by "exists". This is what Parsons does by classifying existence as extra-nuclear and formulating the unrestricted object abstraction principle in terms of nuclear properties alone.

Alternatively, we can hold that what *the golden mountain which exists* possesses by virtue of being so described is a watered-down version of existence, lacking what Meinong called *modal moment*. Parsons achieves this by his elaborate logical mechanism of producing nuclear weakening of extra-nuclear properties.[21]

Parsons also offers us a solution to the first problem concerning relational properties by specifying that the rule of deriving one-place predicates by plugging up the other place of a relational predicate holds only under the restriction that both places are filled with the names of *real* objects. Only if x and y are both real, then xRy will entail both that x[Ry] and [xR]y; but if either of them is unreal, the plugged-up predications will not follow from the other or from the relational predication.

There remains, after all, a very profound mystery regarding existence as a property. Meinong had his reasons for holding that it can never enter into the constitution of an object.

> if I am able to judge in regard to an object that it is not, then it appears that I must first of all have grasped the object, as it were, in order to assert of it non-being, ... blue and also every other object is in a certain way given prior to our decision about its being or non-being in a way which is also not prejudiced against non-being.
>
> Meinong (Über Gegenstandtheorie) tr. by Grossman (1974) p. 77

Meinong seems to be in trouble because he holds the following pair of theses.

(1) An object has all the properties with which it appears before the mind.
(2) One can think of the existent golden mountain just as readily as one can think of the golden mountain.

To avoid the familiar problem, Meinong cannot use the defence that existence is not an *ordinary* property, because thesis (1) was not restricted to ordinary properties. Grossman (1974) imputes to Meinong the following view:

> An entity does not only have all the *properties* with which it appears before the mind. It has all the *features, characteristics* etc. of whatever kind with which it appears before a mind; otherwise it simply would not be this particular entity ... As they appear before the mind the golden mountain, the existing golden mountain and the nonexisting golden mountain are three distinct entities.

This partly sounds like an unfair imputation. Meinong harps on the distinction between modal (extra-nuclear) properties like actual existence and ordinary nuclear properties like being golden or even being existent – in a watered-down sense. This insistence of Meinong may appear to lack adequate logical support. We are not at all clear as to how much there is to this notion of a weaker version of existence. It apparently makes a difference with two imaginary objects, namely the existent Unicorn and the Unicorn, and yet it does not enable the existent Unicorn to exist as much as it enables the Unicorn to be a Unicorn.[22] Does Sherlock Holmes, then, bear only the weaker version of the real-life property of smoking a pipe in the story? All the defences look equally *ad hoc*.

Grossman thinks that Meinong should have given up the doctrine that the golden mountain is *really* golden. I agree. And Frederick Kroon (1992) suggests that Meinong eventually held that the golden mountain is only golden "*within a pretence or assumption*".

All that Meinong can be permitted to hold is that within the appropriate make-believe, the golden mountain is supposed to be golden, that it would take goldenness, mountainousness (and why not even existence) to be a golden mountain (which exists).

Avoiding the view that Holmes has a special in-the-story version of the property of smoking a pipe, some philosophers have suggested that Holmes relates to the ordinary property itself, but in a special in-the-story manner. One such theory is propounded by McMichael and Zalta (1980). Hercule Poirot, according to them, *includes* the property of being clever, being a Belgian and being a detective, but *exemplifies* the properties of being created by Agatha Christie, being nonexistent etc. A real-life detective differs from him in exemplifying the property of being a detective which Poirot only *includes*. That solves a number of puzzles but gives rise to others.

But here again we have an account which sorts out the logical muddles in our natural conception of fictional nonentities by sacrificing part of that conception. We surely do not think that, unlike a real detective who stands out distinctly from all his properties as a possessor of them, a fictional detective is reducible to a mere set of properties. Even Parsons, at an earlier period, was in the grips of some such theory that pure objects are not only associated one-to-one with sets of properties but that they *were* the sets themselves.[23] All these technically elegant but intuitively uncomfortable accounts spring, I think, from a refusal to make the distinctions between the different games we play and the different conventions we obey across our different types of talk about objects.

Inside game (2) Holmes really bears all the genuine properties. Existence, as such, it not a distinguishing property in either game (2) or game (1). In game (1) there is no question of Holmes smoking a pipe or Cinderella wearing or not wearing size seven shoes because there is no Holmes or Cinderella available for reference there. Holmes is said to be nonexistent in the master-game or Game*. So, a question other than that concerning existence cannot be significantly asked about Holmes from the absolute point of view of Game*. My metaphysical answer to the question: "How do nonexistents bear properties?" is "*They don't*".

5.4.3 *One Bad Argument for a True Conclusion*

It is a mistake to construct an ontology which finds nonexistent bearers of real properties. Sherlock Holmes *knows* an enormous amount about miracle plays, medieval pottery, the Buddhism of Ceylon (vide: *The Sign of Four*), *dreams* under the influence of cocaine, and of course *thinks* harder than any of us. Still he *does not exist*. To fear that this admission upsets Descartes' "I think therefore I exist" is to miss both the Cartesian point and the shift of language-games between "Holmes thinks" and "Holmes does not exist". As I have said *ad nauseam* already, Holmes bears the properties of vast erudition, drug addiction and logical thinking in game (2), where he also full-fledgedly exists. He is describable as nonexistent in the master-game, where he does not bear any of those real properties. As far as pure actual-world discourse goes, the name "Holmes" is not available at all to figure even in the list of knowledgeless, dreamless, thoughtless things, let alone in the list of knowing, dreaming and thinking ones. For the true conclusion that purely fictional objects like Holmes or Hamlet never really bear any property, Gregory Currie suggests the following bad argument:[24]

1. If Holmes thinks and he does not exist then I cannot be sure that I think therefore I exist.
2. I *can* be sure that I think therefore I exist.
3. Therefore it is not true both that Holmes thinks and he does not exist.
4. It is true that Holmes does not exist.
5. Therefore it is not true that Holmes thinks.

The very first premise of this argument misconstrues Descartes "cogito" as resting on the universal generalisation that whatever thinks exists (which is as dubitable as the generalisation that whatever walks exists) and ignores the essential indexical quality of "I think". Currie remarks with specious profundity:

> How, then do we know that *we* exist, since our epistemic situation is just like that of Holmes? What could we ever do to establish that we exist? Nothing, according to those who think that some things are real and some things are not (ibid, p. 132).

I do think that some things are real and others are not. But I do not think that the unreal things are in the same epistemic situation as ourselves. They are in no epistemic situation whatsoever. In lacking reality they are excluded from all situations. Even if I held that everything is real, the answer to the question: "What can I *do* to demonstrate that I exist?" would be "precious little". Someone who suspects that I am a figment of fancy will consider my thinking and saying "I think" to be as unreal as my existence. If my reality is already in question, I would not be making myself "a bit realer" to a sceptical onlooker by repeated avowals of thinking!

NOTES

[1] One of the impossibly wise characters of the aforementioned Stevenson interlude remarks about a fellow unreal "not that George is up to much – for he's little more'n a name."

[2] Here Goodman may be leaning on his own non-depictive theory of creative representation.

[3] Ziff's (1979) conclusion that existence has nothing to do with successful reference, accordingly sounds too rash. He too adduces the evidence of *bona fide* singular reference to deceased individuals,

non-concrete individuals and so on. But if audience-recognised intention to refer (rather than objective existence of the referent) is the basis of successful reference, when is such desire to refer thwarted? Ziff tries to introduce the constraint of coherence at this point. He too thinks that "refer" is an achievement verb, governed by publicly applicable, objective criteria. It is one thing to refer successfully to non-actual or fictional items and another thing to fail to refer. A coherent body of presupposed information which is socially transmissible is the minimum condition for successful reference. If I am telling you a realistic story about a giraffe called "Grunt" and you ask "How does Grunt like it in Antarctica?" your use of his name has failed to refer, i.e. you have failed, by the coherence constraint on the assumed informational package, to pick out the right individual.

[4] Jargon brought into use in this area by Parsons. See his explanation in Parsons (1980) pp. 19–29.

[5] For objections to Currie's account, see David Carter (1991) and Alex Byrnne (1993).

[6] Strawson's *Individual* (1959 reprinted 1971) p. 18.

[7] We ought not to take the above set of solutions too rigidly. Creative literature thrives on fracturing the rules of game (2). In spite of a developing body of ascribed details, climaxing with death in a car crash, George and Martha's reference to their son (in Albee's *who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*) is intended, even inside game (2) to be taken as merely shammed reference. In Italo Calvino's self-referential novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, the structure of reference is mind-boggling. The author tries constantly to break the barriers between game (2) and game (1). The series of unfinished pure fictions turns out to be held together only by a story written in the second-person singular about an affair between the reader and *the other reader* of *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*. And we must note that "the reader" is as much a taken reflexively as "you".

[8] Parsons faced this problem when he was making a distinction between native and immigrant objects. An object is native to a story if it is totally *de novo* "created" in the story in question. To this he adds cautiously, "The word 'create' here is meant in the sense in which an author is commonly said to create a character. It does not mean 'bring into existence' for such objects typically do not exist. Perhaps 'create' is a bad word, but it is customarily used in the sense I intend" Parsons (1980) p. 51. Remembering his special sense of "fictional", Parsons can say that the author makes a Meinongian object *fictional* for the first time. But *we* do not need this special usage.

[9] W.R. Carter (1980) makes the point which hardly needs making that those who deny the existence of fictional entities and van Inwagen, who affirms the existence of creatures of fiction, are not talking about the same things.

[10] Such a view was apparently held by Roman Ingarden, a contemporary critic of Meinong and a creationist. See Barry Smith (1980).

[11] Commonsensical claims – which on the face of it speak for creationism of some sort – like the following — "Tolstoy first made Anna fall in love before she visited her brother; then he reversed the order of events" — seem obviously to belong to character-locution. Applying our test, namely, attaching "in the story" to the statement brings out clearly that claims like this do not fit into F2 talk. They are true in our world, not in the world of *Anna Karenina*. They ought to be looked upon as some kind of cross talk between game (1) and game (4), both of whose items are existent in the absolute sense. "Anna" in the above statement must be referring to the character of Anna or, to be more precise, the core cluster of properties of that character.

[12] Some characters may *not* exist as well, although I am not sure that nonexistent characters can be singularly referred to. "Cinderalla's stepbrother does not exist" says that there is not such a character. We should recognise that such a person-type does subsist, but nobody has ever pretended in the relevant tradition that such a person-type was exemplified. So, it has not been made into a character.

[13] Aristotle *On the Art of Poetry* tr. Bywater, Oxford (1920, 1988) p. 37.

[14] See Currie (1990) pp. 171–81

[15] Wolterstorff (1980) pp. 144–55.

[16] Walton (1978a).

[17] See p. 117 of *Fiction and Emotion* by Bijoy H. Boruah, 1988. I impugn Boruah's insistence that our feelings for fictions are as rational and as real as our feelings for real-life situations, as will be clear below.

[18] Woods (1970) does this with the somewhat ironical "*olim*"-operator. In Latin that word literally means "once upon a time" – quite the opposite of "it is fictional that".

[19] For this pair of terms see Kit Fine (1982).

[20] This use of "Platonism" and "Empiricism" is Kit Fine's (1982), not mine.

[21] Parsons (1980), p. 44.

[22] Meinong's point in securing special "in-the-story" versions of even the property of *existence* can now be appreciated if we look at stories like Italo Calvino's "The Non-Existent Knight". The fully-fledged hero of the story, namely. Agilulf, has a horse, armour, several lovers and a devoted valet. Yet even in the story, he does not exist. When Charlemagne irritatedly asks him on a routine parade why he is not showing his face, Agilulf answers in a hollow voice from inside his empty helmet: "Sire, because I do not exist."

[23] Zalta's account (see McMichael and Zalta, 1980) solves the problem of the existent golden mountain rather elegantly. Even if we talk of *the golden mountain which exemplifies existence*, that object will only *include*, and not *exemplify*, the property of exemplifying existence. So it will still not manage to exist. Thus, we can have some *control* over but not genuine *understanding* of the behaviour of empty descriptions. Perhaps such fabricated descriptions deserve such technical manipulations. After all, works of fiction do not normally describe *some* of their characters as existent this or that.

[24] See p. 132, *The Nature of Fiction* (1990).

CHAPTER 6
APPEARING UNREALS

The imagination cannot see with such excellence as the eye ... If the painter wishes to see ... monstrous things which might terrify or which would be buffoonish and laughable or truly pitiable, he is their Lord and God.

Leonardo da Vinci *On Painting* (pp. 22–32)

6.1 PHENOMENAL OBJECTS AND THE IDEA OF GAME 3

Dr Norbert Hanold, a young lecturer in archaeology at a German university, suddenly became obsessed with an ancient Roman relief. The sculpture depicted a beautiful young lady stepping along in a hasty, unusual gait, her flowing dress a little pulled up to reveal her sandalled feet. Hanold started seeing a particular once-alive Hellenic woman in that relief, called her "Gradiva", and kept having dreams about her. On the basis of his dreams and a coherent web of spurious historical evidence, he convinced himself that Gradiva had lived in Pompeii and was buried there on the fateful day of the eruption of Visuvius in the year 79 A.D. Haunted by his obsessive fantasies, he made a trip to the ancient ruins in Pompeii. There, one day at the midday "hour of ghosts" he actually met the dream heroine Gradiva herself, risen as it were from her lavagrave! Finally, towards the end of the story (written by Jensen and retold by Freud[1]) Hanold is shocked to find out that Fräulein Zoë Bertgang – a contemporary and very much alive woman – indeed, the daughter of his own neighbour across the street, who had somehow got wind of his delusive fixation with this imaginary Greek girl, was impersonating Gradiva. Partly for fun and partly to cure Hanold's neurosis, Zoë was pretending to be the ancient Pompeiian woman and was flirting with him while her father was busy with zoological research in Pompeii. Now supposing, for the purposes of philosophical illustration, that Jensen's story is reportage rather than fiction. Hanold's use of the name "Gradiva", both *inside* his self-delusive world of crypto-archaeology and *outside* it – when he would expose the unreality of this creature of mere dream and fantasy – picks out a visually experienced item which does not originate with a fictional use of language. Reference to her arose with some kind of *perceptual* experience, namely the imaginatively enriched experience of *seeing* objects *in* pictorial representations, dreams and hallucinations – in a special intentional sense of "seeing". Notice that before or even after seeing Gradiva in the Roman relief and in

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 143–170.

his dreams Hanold had never read any historical or fictional document mentioning Gradiva. For Hanold, she did not emerge from the context of any text or discourse (though for us she did). So, we cannot correctly analyse the statement "Gradiva had an unusual gait" as a game 2 statement, especially when the disillusioned Hanold makes such a statement alluding connivingly to his own past dreams or delusions about the sculpted figure. Nor can we make sense of "Gradiva did not exist" in terms of the unavailability of a specific fictional (game 2) item in the factual world (of game 1). Some fictional works, especially children's stories, come with illustrations which might fill in additional details about characteristics left unspecified by the text. Still, the textual descriptions remain central and essential while the pictorial aid to imagination can be variable and arbitrary. The identification of people mentioned in novels, legends, fairy tales, etc. is primarily *linguistic*. We cannot, literally, *look* at a fictional face, and the face from a novel cannot look at us or look a certain way to us.[2] A face in a dream or from a painting or film can, on the contrary, stare at me, have an emotional attitude towards me – the spectator — and I (along with others, in the case of paintings or film) can "see" it. Gradiva, and her kind, first *appear* in someone's ontologically unevaluated (or negatively evaluated) experience and are then talked about – descriptively or "existence-denyingly". Occasions for speaking of what actually is nothing, thus arise not only out of fictions fabricated with words but also out of dreams, hallucinations, films, paintings and sculptures. The apparent reference to specific nonexistent items, on such occasions, is *visually* rather than *verbally* supported. Of course, the eventual reference that we are interested in is made by the public use of *words*, e.g. by the expression, "That glistening pool of water" used in the context of what turns out to be a mirage. But on such occasions the singling-out-expression "that" draws us back into the phenomenological content of the hallucination. The topics of the ontologically uncommitted description of what went on in the dream, what something looked or felt like in the hallucinatory experience, what is represented in a painting or of the subsequent negative existential do not originate with make-believe *speech* or fictional use of *words*. Such items can be silently day-dreamed, experienced in a mescaline-induced vision, intentionally pointed at in a painted canvas, projected onto a screen. They consist of more than just words and often remain unnamed. I should like to call such intentional targets of reference *phenomenal objects*, and those among them which fail to have a place in the actual world *appearing unreals*.[3] Not all phenomenal objects are unreal. For many real objects enter our dreams and hallucinations with or without an imposed foreign character. We have guests from game (1) (more or less easily recognisable as such) appearing as phenomenal objects. My real-life schoolteacher can appear in a dream as fighting with an extra-terrestrial. A painting may depict Shakespeare along with some cherubs showering flowers from the sky. In such contexts, among all those individuals who are presented or represented, the extra-terrestrial and the cherubs would be appearing unreals, merely phenomenal objects. Shakespeare and my schoolteacher would be phenomenal objects who happen to be actual historical individuals as well. (Notice that I am not calling the brush strokes on the canvas the phenomenal objects.)

In this chapter I shall try to clarify complexities and settle controversies (more accurately, unsettle prejudices) concerning such unreal objects of experience which figure as subjects of a distinctive class of singular existence denials. Such clarification, I hope, will enrich our idea of what I mean by game (3). Game (3) appeals to what Wolterstorff or Walton would understand by "the world of a picture" or "the world of a dream". But do we have singular reference within such worlds? Standing in front of Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed* one can say with or without a pointing gesture, "That rabbit running in front of the steam engine is imaginary." Here the indexical "that" will not pick out those subtle brush strokes on the canvas but *that very* rabbit which we indistinctly but unmistakably see in them. Some critics may object to my use of the particularising "*that very*" here. The painter depicts no particular rabbit but an arbitrarily chosen "any old" rabbit. True, no single *actual* rabbit was depicted (as would be the case if it were a plain photograph), but in the picture world it is that very one and none other which we see running ahead of the train. Its particularity is as much part of the visual make-believe as its being a rabbit at all.

I must hasten, at this point, to forestall some confusions. By a phenomenal object I do not mean a mental entity, an idea, an image, impression, or a sense-datum. Mental entities like a particular pain or a certain decision (whether they are identifiable with bodily or cerebral states or not) happen in time and are also, if in a slightly indirect way, locatable in space – *via* the sentient body to which they happen. That is why our talk about them, I think, deserves to be considered under game (1), i.e. discourse about actual objects and occurrences. But phenomenal objects – especially the ones which are merely phenomenal or *natives* of game (3), the specific appearing unreals – do not have any place or casual anchorage in the actual material or psychological world. They are not even abstract entities. Our talk about appearing unreals, from the point of view of hard-headed realism, is *just talk*. Yet, like fictional discourse which simulates the mechanism of singular predication and information transmission of serious-world talk, our reports of dreams and our description of what goes on in a film or in the world of a narrative painting *simulate* the entire referential predicative practice of real-world discourse. It is to understand this type of game of make-believe in a non-revisionary way that I invoke the notion of phenomenal objects. Apart from serving the purpose of displaying the intentional structure of an entrenched style of conversation, the notion has no ontological weight at all. It will be philosophically quite counterproductive to construe Macbeth's dagger as itself a mental event or a brain state or a sense-impression. For one thing, it would then be *real*.[4] The tuft of hair or speck seen by a sufferer from what is called *muscae volitantes* is a nonexistent phenomenal hair or speck. The perception of it is a mental event which is caused by floating debris in the fluids of the eye. But there is a sense in which I do not *see* the débris in the fluids, although that is what causes me to see the speck. When Macbeth entertains the possibility that the dagger he could see but could not grasp was a "dagger of the mind", he was not being philosophically astute. Minds (or brains) do not have daggers in them. The appearing dagger is as much outside the mind as the real dagger would be. What I mean by "the phenomenal dagger" in this case is not the mental or cerebral event identifiable as Macbeth's seeming to see a dagger but what this latter psychological event has as its intentional object. If Macbeth "sees" the same dagger again, that mental or cerebral

event will be a distinct happening but its object will be the very same phenomenal object. If this intended dagger happened to be real, then it would not be merely caused by or anchored in, or be part of the surface of a real material object; it would have to be the *same* as such a substance with a handle and a blade.

This insistence on my part might give another false impression. By this sort of talk about phenomenal objects am I not ontologically committing myself to a twilight zone of non-mental, non-physical, pure objects of experience? No, I am surely not doing that. Phenomenal objects are not Meinongian objects. For here, I am not concerned about actual metaphysics or even ground-level phenomenology of perception. I am trying to make sense, in the simplest possible terms, of our ordinary speech patterns concerning seeing an impossible dog-man in a dream or gazing at a logically impossible palace in an Escher print. We are not concerned with finding ontological asylum for "homeless" objects of hallucinatory or representational "experience" (because we are out to demonstrate straightforwardly how such objects do not exist at all), much less with the operations of optical, cerebral or mental phenomena responsible for our having such experiences. The question, in other words, which I wish to address is the following: when someone points at something as if he can visually isolate it as presented or represented (in the background of a suspected hallucination, a film, a painting, a frieze, etc) and says: "That does not exist"; or asks "Is that real?"; or decides "That, unlike these others, is actually existent" – what is it that the demonstrative "that" latches on to and how are we to understand the existence-denial, existence-doubt or existence-affirmation?

Finding an actual referent for every such "that" either in the mental world or more misleadingly in the coloured light projected on the screen or in the paint blobs or ink strokes on canvas or paper – will not do because those are items which routinely *do* exist. Our statements to the effect that they do not exist will have to be interpreted in some tortuous way in order to be made true for them. My suggestion would be that such demonstratives directly pick out phenomenal objects in a special game (3) of perceptual make-believe that we play with words when we describe, as it were from inside the deliberate artistic or spontaneous hallucinatory experience, what we "saw" — thus bracketing out the question of actual truth or existence. Some of these phenomenal objects transpire to have been *bona fide* physical objects, correctly or incorrectly characterised, while others are merely apparent unreals. Such an appearing unreal is the green slime Charles is so scared of and yet so fond of watching on the television screen, or the griffin that my fossil-specialist friend keeps meeting in her nightmares, or the unicorn which is dipping its horn in water in the Leonardo drawing in the Ashmolean Museum. The light waves on the TV screen, the electrochemical changes in the brain cells of my friend when she is having those terrible dreams, or the masterly strokes of metal point by Leonardo are all existent items. But the green slime, the griffin and the unicorn are *seen nonexistents*.

6.2 SOME QUALMS QUELLED

I have emphatically denied that a hallucinated griffin or a griffin seen in graphics is a Meinongian pure object. Yet in the last sentence I spoke of them as seen nonexistents. This could be confusing. Let me explain my stand on this issue.

First, once again, which issue? Suppose Macbeth is a friend in real life and he tells me: "I have been seeing *this dagger* which, I know, does not exist." What should I take his expression "this dagger" as standing for or picking out? That is the issue. If we do not make the distinctions between language-games, three answers initially suggest themselves.

(a) It picks out a nonexistent object, an incomplete Meinongian dagger that has all and only those nuclear properties which Macbeth's experience ascribes to it (and is logically open about the rest of the usual properties of daggers).
(b) It picks out a complete but non-actual dagger dwelling in some other possible world.
(c) It picks out merely a sense-datum or visual impression which could be appropriately related to a material object but in fact was not.

I reject all these answers. My argument against (a) goes like this: Macbeth's visual experience and my verbal usage when I say "Macbeth saw a dagger" (playing along with his claim of seeing it) demands a referent which is an actual dagger presented in a specific region of public space. It is complete with a blade and a handle, has a definite material constitution and an unseen underside. Even if we can isolate one specific Meinongian object which had the right bunch of nuclear properties, it will not have the required *extra-nuclear* property of completeness. A Meinongian dagger at best has some watered-down nuclear version of completeness, whereas what Macbeth's vision *intended* as its object possesses full-blooded completeness. Thus "What Macbeth saw" does not refer to a Meinongian object.

The reasoning against (b) will run as follows: non-actual daggers in other possible worlds may be complete with recognition-transcendent properties. Still, none of them could be actually sensuously presented to Macbeth in the actual world (on pain of becoming actual). What Macbeth saw was actually sensuously presented. So "What Macbeth saw" does not pick out a possible-world entity. Epistemically, it is always possible that what Macbeth saw was an actual complete dagger. It does not follow, however, from this, that, given that he was hallucinating, what he saw was a possible complete dagger.

Against (c), my reasoning, as indicated above, is simple. What Macbeth saw did not exist. The sense impressions or dagger-appearance – if we admit any – *did* exist. Hence Macbeth neither claimed to see nor denied the existence of the dagger-like sense-data.

So how are we to understand the statement: "This dagger I have been seeing does not exist"?

A doggedly Russellian rephrasing of Macbeth's negative existential would be:

> I was visually appeared to in a daggerly manner but the region of space which I identified as containing a dagger was not at that time occupied by any dagger (which was responsible casually for my visual experience).

But this reading does grave injustice to the original *singular* exposure of unreality. It evades the pertinent question: *which* dagger it is that you are revealing the nonexistence of?

The only way to keep faithful to the logical structure of the existence-denial and yet not to embrace a Meinongian or any other mistaken account is to relativise our solution to the different language-games. Within game (1) "What Macbeth saw"

and "The dagger which I see" are *empty* terms. They are not genuine referring expressions at all. Macbeth did not *see* anything, because if he had then there would *have been* something which he saw. But we consciously play game (3), making believe that whatever is "seen" in a detected hallucination, or a confirmed dream, or in a picture or film is *really* the case. So in game (3) "What Macbeth saw" picks out an *actual* complete dagger with an underside and other unrecognised properties. Within game (3) this is a singular term picking out an existent (phenomenal) object. Now as I come out of this game, I realise that, unlike Macbeth's hand which also might have figured in the content of the hallucination, the dagger has no place in the real world of game (1). So I make a mixed move which neither game (3) (where the dagger can't be called nonexistent) nor game (1) (where *that* dagger is not available for reference) would allow me to make. The griffins are seen in game (3). They are nonexistent in game (1).

A second serious misunderstanding lurks around the corner. Since much of our talk about real people and commodities is also a description of direct perceptual experience, would most game (1) assertions first have to be evaluated as game (3) moves? Now, although I have characterised game (3) as "phenomena description" I have also made it clear that within game (3) we do not just speak of appearances, looks, touches and smells. Waiving the issue of their existence – and often knowing that they do not exist – we speak of directly seen, heard or felt items themselves as they appear. Thus the above misunderstanding becomes difficult to resist. Yet game (3) is consciously played only when the experiential context is either suspected or established as hallucinatory or representational (seeing things in pictures, films or sculptures). If someone is completely taken in by a hallucination or a film, his talk will count as an attempt to play game (1) rather than as game (3). If you seriously raise a sceptical doubt and express it about the objects of wakeful experience rather than about the belief in or experience of it, then you will have to play the master-game: "Is that table real?" In this query "that table" must pick out a game (3) item, whereas "real" would have to be taken as a game (1) predicate. Otherwise the question would be trivially answered in the affirmative. The reason why game (3) becomes more than just a therapeutic or aesthetic occasion for describing the contents of hallucinatory or pictorial "seeing" is that sometimes real objects can be wittingly or unwittingly included among the targets of reference within game (3). Fred can dream that Fred's (real) wife is speaking amorously to a purely imaginary French photographer. A painter can depict Quine gazing at an Escheresque round-square cupola. Talk of Fred's wife and Quine would, in such contexts, count first as game (3) moves so that the information that *some* of what was seen actually exists could be non-trivial. But that does not mean that whenever Fred's wife or Quine is within the speaker's visual field, his demonstrative or descriptive reference to them has to be first taken as talk about *phenomenal* objects. Since most of us in our daily conversation are neither sceptics nor phenomenalists nor believers in any veil-of-perception-type representationalism – our straightforward game (1) speeches about objects of unsuspected veridical perception do not need to be evaluated first as moves in game (3). It is one thing self-consciously to describe objects *just as we think we see them in a dream or in a picture* and quite another thing to describe objects (committedly) as they are.

A minor worry may arise here with the fact that only seen nonexistents are being spoken of. Why not *heard* nonentities also?

In this chapter I confine myself deliberately to our discourse about phenomenal objects identified in the context of visual experience. People do report auditory sensations which turn out to be hallucinatory in nature, e.g. hearing a ringing in one's ears, discerning music in an objectively soundless situation whilst under the influence of drugs.[5] Anscombe gives the example of someone talking about smelling burnt rubber when it is found out that there was no such smell around. The notorious pains or tickles in amputated limbs are also given as examples of phenomenal objects of organic sensations. Tactile hallucinations of ants creeping down the skin are fairly common too. Yet I feel unsure about our use of demonstratives and the exact subject-terms for existence-denials, if any, on such occasions of non-visual phoney experiences. Here are some of my reasons.

A material *body* itself is hardly ever said to be the direct object of hearing. Although I speak indiscriminately of seeing a dog and hearing a dog and ask whether *I* am audible, there is no clear and philosophically unloaded counterpart in the visual case to play the part of the dog's bark or my voice. Looks, glimpses and appearances do not have the event-like particularity and independence of sounds. A bell can be heard because it *makes* a ringing noise, it is not seen because it *makes* an appearance (the superficial comfort of "making an appearance" here is just idiomatic, not phenomenological). That is why, especially in the representational case, a real hearing of the roar of King Kong in a movie theatre demands a real sound (misidentified) as its direct object, whereas the real seeing can take the nonexistent King Kong himself and not his loosened "looks" as its direct object. But can't there be a character in a film which is only heard and never seen? Would we not express our existence-denial about that person as "That which we heard did not exist"? Perhaps we would. Touch also yields direct objects of experience rather than only a feature or aspect of such objects. We can imagine devising tactile representations of a cold and slippery embrace of a mermaid we on the basis of which the mermaid we touched could be said to be a phenomenal object native to game (3). A dramatic sequence towards the end of the *Mahābharata* has Dhṛtarāṣṭra the blind king smashing an iron image of Bhīma the killer of his son, with a mighty hug, thinking he was killing the real Bhīma. The Bhīma he took in his arms and crushed did not exist. The existing Bhīma was very much alive and was not hugged by him. The iron statue *was* there for Dhṛtarāṣṭra to embrace, but this was not Bhīma. In a manner of speaking, he smashed a cutaneously identified appearing unreal. But once again the existence of the iron statue draws us towards an account which construes his act rather as misidentifying one *real* object as another. The King more naturally says, "The thing I crushed was not Bhīma" (because he did hug and crush something real) rather than, "The Bhīma I crushed was not real." For the sake of avoiding such confusions let us stick to the visual cases.

The possibility of an unseen character in a film was mentioned rather casually a few lines back. The presence of unseen items in a primarily visual game of make-believe has been a sore spot for philosophers of cinematographic depiction. Assuming for the moment that while watching a film we have some sort of a visual experience of being presented with depth, motion, people and places, similar to a dream experience, a murderer who enters the film scene unseen gives rise to the following dilemma. Following from the claim that whatever takes place in the picture world I make believe that I see – the claim "I make believe that I see the unseen murderer" can be interpreted in two and only two ways. Under the narrower scope of the "make believe" operator, it could be the claim that there is an unseen murderer and I make-believe that I see him. But this commits one to the existence of the murderer outside the make-believe. We want the murderer unseen but we also want him to be *unreal*. Moreover it falsifies the content of my film-watching stance. It is part of that stance that the murder is not seen by anyone other than the murderer and perhaps the victim – not even by me. Alternatively, under a wider scope, we could take the claim as: "I make believe that there is an unseen murderer whom I see." Under this interpretation, every spectator of such a film sequence is invited to make believe that a self-contradictory proposition has come true! Watching secret operations in a film does not seem to be logically that stressful! To solve this puzzle Currie[6] has proposed that we drop the assumption that in every content of a visual make-believe viewers necessarily import themselves as people who are seeing the objects and happenings. In many of my dreams I consciously feel present as a participant and witness. But it is quite conceivable that I dream that a situation is obtaining without my presence, e.g. that friends are lamenting my death. When I watch the film *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, I definitely do not make believe that I am seeing Captain Nemo and others under the ocean. If I did, then along with all the bizarre perspectives of the shots (e.g. looking deep into the crevice of a wall seeing things as a crawling ant would see them or looking down suddenly from the sky at the roof of a house of which intermittently the interiors are being shown), I should have to imagine that I am seeing all of them just like that. This is absurd. In an important sense I do pretend that I inhabit the same world as the picture world because playing game (3) is making believe that one is playing game (1) with these pictorially perceived objects. But just as in describing an event in actual life I do not have to imply that I saw it happening, in playing game (3) I need not include myself as an eyewitness in every scenario.

Game (3) is distinctively visual – and that is its hallmark as against game (2), which is primarily literary. But its visual character does not consist in a licence to preface every paraphrase of a game (3) sentence with "It appears to me as if I see that..." It is visual because what is seen determines the content of the make-believe. Due to the actual visual experience I go through in the theatre, it is possible for me to get caught up in the make-believe that a murderer is entering unseen, or that no one ever sees the king in some country (as in Tagore's play, *King of the Dark Chamber*, which Wittgenstein admired), without any feat of imagining the impossible or pretending to see the unseen.

At this point, I can anticipate another complaint. I have invoked game (3) to make sense of the referential repertoire which hallucination description or picture talk seems to open up for us. Use of this repertoire, I thought, is crucial for understanding the linguistic act of "unmasking a hallucination from within". Against such an advertised need for speaking singularly about hallucinatory objects, the following objection could be raised. Either for the exposure of the hallucinatory character of an experience or for making explicit the contents of a visual make-believe, it may be urged, we do not need any singular reference to seen nonexistents. "That dagger does not exist" can be taken as a statement about a specific region of *space*: "That place over there is daggerless." Since the place pointed at really exists, one can refer to it, both from inside and outside the spurious experience, as where the dagger appeared to be and where it was not.

The role of place-fixing in sense perception is of course an intriguing matter; it becomes even more complicated in hallucinatory experience (where some philosophers thought we need to appeal to a private space and others – I think correctly – thought that we do not)[7] and in pictorial or cinematographic seeing. But there are reasons why I cannot accept the above analysis of the negative existential regarding the hallucinated or painted dagger. To start with, consider this case. Macbeth has what Lewis calls "Prosthetic Vision", controlled wholly by a computer which directly stimulates optical images in the relevant centres of his brain. Macbeth is now facing with open eyes an actual dagger lying on a table in front of him. It accidentally so happens that the computer stimulates a dagger image in his brain. Macbeth truthfully reports seeing a dagger in front of him. We would like to say that the dagger he *sees* does not exist (because it is not the one he is "looking" at) for even if he was looking at a rose at that point, he would have seen a dagger thanks to the computer. Yet we cannot say that the place which he points at has no dagger in it. So the paraphrase fails. Perhaps we can try to take care of such cases of "veridical hallucinations" by mentioning *counterfactually tightened* casual relationships. Still the analysis which avoids specific reference to the particular hallucinated dagger will at most "unmask the hallucination from without"[8] by telling us that no *such* dagger occupies the place. It will never tell us exactly which dagger seen by Macbeth failed to exist.

The interpretation in terms of the place pointed at also fails miserably to capture the sense of the following *affirmative existential* issued in the context of pictorial seeing. Suppose I am viewing a painting of a dead king with an encased dagger dangling from his waistband. The king is historically real. I have seen in a museum that very famous dagger which he used and which is so realistically depicted in the picture. So I say to a fellow viewer: "*This dagger you see here really exists.*" Now the existent place I point at on the surface of the painting (or photograph) obviously is as daggerless as the empty air that the deluded Macbeth pointed at. Yet to say that the dagger we see does not exist would not be right. To try to trace back causally from the region of the painting to the actual dagger that the artist had in mind will be quite futile. To appeal to the place within the content or world of the picture as the real subject would be surrendering to my suggestion of a game (3)

being played, because it is only in such a game that my pointing at the picture picks out a place on the waistband of a dead king. Reference to places, while integral to most visually backed-up discourse, does not help us explain interesting existential statements without somehow going beyond straight game (1) talk.

For similar reasons, what I do with the mixed move of locating an individual in the game of phenomena-descriptions and finding it absent in plain actual-world talk cannot be done with an operator like "It appears visually that." To the extent that such prefixing yields the right interpretation of the *descriptive* statements about how it is for the hallucinator or the film-watcher during the experience in question, it is a plausible move. But it fails once again when we come to existentials – negative or affirmative. "It appeared visually to Macbeth that there was a dagger hanging in midair but there was no such dagger there" will not do as an analysis of: "The dagger that Macbeth saw did not exist." It is only by recognising the full specificity of the subject of existence-denial or existence-affirmation that we can do justice to such statements. And such recognition makes it essential to place the act of reference within a game of visual make-believe, dream-description or in recapturing a hallucination. The "games" approach is thus not made redundant by any alternative strategy of embedding of existence-assessments inside a straightforward "It appears that ..." idiom.

6.3 THE DREAMT-OF AND THE DEPICTED: CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS

My central idea in this chapter is this: given that an item can be first visually, and from there, linguistically identified unmistakably as a specific individual with certain features (on the basis of a pictorial representation or a possibly hallucinatory experience) in such a way that it may or may not turn out to have been an item of the spatio-temporal world, our singular negative existentials, using visually backed-up demonstrative or name-like subject-terms can be made intelligible as a switch from game (3) to game (1) – the switch itself being a master-game move. All perceptual errors, thus, need not necessarily be taken as cases of misperceiving one existent object for another, or ascribing foreign properties to an existent item. The possibility of pure existential (rather than identification) errors has to be admitted. As I hope to argue in greater detail towards the end of this chapter, our "This"-s and "That"-s will have to be given a category stretching wide enough to span across actual and unreal items. If we do not permit these radical measures to be taken at this minimally semantic level, we shall have to reinterpret our straightforward denials of existence of some experienced and ostensively identified items in such a way as to make our visually supported demonstratives always denote some other real items (perhaps beyond the knowledge and intention of the demonstrator himself). They must also explain away the *existence*-predicate in favour of some epistemological predicates which defy commonsense. If the "games" *reconstrual* enables us to avoid such violence to our natural understanding of how we operate with our own words, that seems to be a good enough reason to embrace the "games" story.

But are we not doing another kind of violence to natural language by forcing our talk about existentially erroneous experience and our talk about what we "see" in frescoes and friezes into the same language game? Do art and illusion after all sail in the same boat? Hallucinations and dreams seem to offer us *private* one-person referents, as against film-watching, or viewing paintings depicting imaginary scenes which make appearing unreals available to many of us simultaneously. Again, a single hallucination is usually much weaker, more fleeting and sketchier in detail than a sustained non-chaotic dream. The same dream characters are not only reidentified during an unbroken stretch of sleep, people also report the same nonexistent items' repeated appearance in dreams separated by days, months, even years. The reidentification might be philosophically suspect, but outside philosophy one would not easily withdraw such claims of having – against one's wish – had to revisit the same nonexistent haunted house or reencounter the same slimy monster in more than one dream. Neither short-lived nor sustained delusive experiences can be shared, thus making all such claims of reidentification, in some sense, incorrigible. However, I am not sure that this incorrigibility would make our use of language to describe the content of such experiences any more "private" than our use of words to describe veridical experiences.

Films, on the other hand, are publicly perceived and interpersonally reidentified and rechecked. My mistake in identifying who I saw in a film or painting can be corrected by you. Like the sameness of fictional nonentities which is finally judged by appeal to the identity of the work in question, the identity of the nonexistents seen (pictorially) by two viewers is established by appeal to the sameness of the picture or the film itself. Our seeing of them is, therefore, less open to philosophical doubt.

Nevertheless, in the final analysis, I think, this private–public distinction between the content of pictorial "seeing" and that of hallucinatory "seeing" is not so fundamental. The actual visual experience, whether veridical or hallucinatory, is unsharable in one sense. Even my seeing of a picture cannot become your seeing of it. The intentional identity of what is seen, on the other hand, remains as communicable for a dreamt object as for a pictured or filmed one. This becomes starkly apparent when the filmed or pictured object is nonexistent outside the "world" of the representation. Still, one could justly object, it is bizarre to reduce seeing the face of God in the Sistine Chapel frescoes to mistakenly believing one is seeing the face of God, as we can do with a report based on alleged occult "visions" of God. Yet it sounds absurd to suggest that the religious hallucinator mistakes his brain states for the face of God, whereas in films and pictures one can easily say that what is seen is the projected light on the screen, the patches of paint on the canvas etc. In neither case is the problem of explaining the everyday claim of seeing fairies and unicorns with full or half-belief in their unreality so easily solved. But we can show how the reductive pressures operate in two different directions.

Apart from papers and canvasses, screens and actual projections and sounds, there are other extensional actual entities which enter into the casual history of films and paintings which might, especially in their case, make implausible our kind of direct-reference account (or, if we may be excused for calling it so,

mock-realism) about the merely phenomenal. The causal mechanism of dreams and hallucinations is much more shrouded in mystery. But seeing things (with *prima facie* decision as to their reality) in naturalistic paintings, e.g. a Dutch still life, on the other hand is very easily interpreted as seeing the existent items (fruits, drapery, furniture etc) which served as models – if necessarily *as* some other things. Consider, for instance, Raphael's *The School of Athens*. An obstinate extensionalist might insist that, in fact, we are seeing Leonardo da Vinci's face when we seem to be seeing Plato's. Habitual film-goers quite regularly – much to the delight of the extensionalist philosophers – refer to film characters by the names of the actors impersonating them. Thus, we might be tempted to say that in watching films even with wholly fictional plots one never, for a moment, sees anything which is nonexistent.

But this complacency is easily upset. Take, first, the case of paintings. An enormous majority of pictorial depictions have no direct or indirect "basis" in actual originals unless one reduces a painting to its elementary representational units, such as the general shapes of trees, flowers, human figures, etc. When we see Picasso's Minotaur series[9] we cannot be tortuously referring to any real animal or animal limbs that Picasso was copying and combining. We have in front of us, pictorially represented, that very semi-human individual who was born of the Queen of Crete's passion for a bull. Unless we stop seeing anything but the technical qualities of the drawing and composition (i.e. aesthetic features of the picture or its medium as a material or abstract object), the Minotaur that we seem to see in those pictures – perhaps the same one in many of them – is a *bona fide* nonexistent – an *appearing unreal* in my sense of that term. This might happen in a film as well where ingenious tricks of photography are used to create a fictitious character or an imaginary place, to which as a whole no real actor, artifact or geographical location can be found to correspond in the causal history of shooting the film.

The distinction that we have been trying to exploit above is best expressed by the pair of terms coined by Evans[10], namely "Existentially Conservative" and "Existentially Creative". When a boy sits on the arm of a sofa and playfully claims that he is riding a horse or children play with mud pies – the pretence or make-believe involved is *existentially conservative.* From the make-believe truth that there is a horse that the boy is riding, or that there are pies that the children are cooking and eating, we can extract the existential quantifier outside the make-believe operator. Because, it is also true, in such cases, that *there exists* something (namely the sofa arm) which is make-believedly a horse that the boy is riding, and that *there exist* things (namely the blobs of mud) which the children pretend are pies, etc. To extend the distinction to perceptual errors, illusions are existentially conservative, whereas hallucinations are existentially creative. Now, game (3) items are typically evoked when there is the risk of a subject-term turning out to be *empty*. And about our inside the make-believe use of empty terms, Evans insightfully remarks:

> The kind of pretence which is involved in the conniving use of empty singular terms is *existentially creative*; the pretence is not that something which there is is other than it is, but that there is something which in fact there isn't.

It is wrong-headed to try to look at the pretence involved in seeing the Minotaur in Picasso's drawings as existentially conservative. We are not seeing a part of the surface of the picture or the lines on paper *as* the Minotaur. We are seeing the Minotaur *in* those lines.[11] The presence of the canvas, or the illuminated screen does not license the construal of our "seeing" things in paintings or films as more like illusions than hallucinations. It is banal to think of our talk about the represented content of films and sculptures as existentially conservative because of the presence of actors, locations, and chunks of marble or bronze. Nevertheless, there are undeniable differences between dreams and depictions. We are taken in by the former but not by the latter. In hallucinations we often lose our sense of unbelief. But we usually enjoy imaginative paintings and films with the same "willing suspension of disbelief" with which we enjoy reading works of fiction. That is why negative existential statements seem to be more worth asserting in the former context than in the latter. Error deserves exposure more than deliberate playful pretence. Of course hallucinations themselves can be roughly of three sorts: delusive, doubtful or non-delusive.[12] When there is nothing there and yet I seriously believe (for however short a span of time) that there is a particular object with certain features – I have a *delusive* hallucination. I am really fooled. Most ordinary dreams involve such delusive hallucinations during the dreams. But there is a kind of experience all of us are acquainted with which involves half-absorption into the hallucination, where we seem to be neutral or half-way between belief and disbelief in the reality of the content. When my background information tells me that what I see in front is very unlikely to be water (because, suppose, I am in a dry desert) and yet I immediately have a sensation absolutely indistinguishable from my past correct visual sensation of water – I have a *doubtful* hallucination. Such doubtful experience is the ideal basis for earnestly asked existence questions. Finally, when I am convinced that there is no such thing in my visual field and yet I appear to be seeing something, I am self-consciously having a *non-delusive* hallucination.

The above distinctions within hallucinations show the falsity of the initial suggestion that we could distinguish representational *seeing-in* from hallucinatory seeing on the basis of the necessary delusiveness of the latter. Hallucinations need not always be convincing, whereas we can get really caught up in a pictorial pretence. Indeed, a skilfully done wax image or an immaculately painted wall depicting a colonnaded archway *can* give rise to momentary delusive hallucination – although we shall not then be exemplifying the artistic act of seeing-in. Comparing the experience of watching a film with that of vivid dreams during R.E.M. sleep, the cinema screen has been called "the dream screen".[13] So, I think the presence or absence of the initial psychological attitude of coerced belief or allowing oneself to be taken in by the experience does not matter. Negative existentials may be epistemologically less surprising in the context of pictorial seeing, but they are just as puzzling from a logical point of view. Even if it starts with some delusive or doubtful hallucination, the stage at which the singular term is used to deny the existence of what was "seen", either in a dream or in a depiction, is a stage when the user of the term has a firm belief in its actual vacuity. We must have come out of whatever pretence or mistake or hallucination gave rise to the original "referring use", yet in

order to make clear which particular item it was that we are now asserting to be unreal, we have to play once again a game of make-believe with our "conniving" singular terms on the one hand and with the "out and out" existence predicate on the other. Within this game each of the phenomenal objects exists and has the features attributed to it by the dream, the delusion or the painting. Whether the original experiential context in which we identified them induced belief or only playful suspension of disbelief is a matter of indifference to the account of singular existence-denials concerning visually identified items. But, even if the belief induced by the visual experience is false or the identification of the object is somehow erroneous, can the experience itself be completely objectless? Can we speak of "seeing something" at all when the something which is seen does not exist? This is the question we address in the next section.

6.4 TWO SENSES OF "SEE"?

There are, on the face of it, two kinds of transitive verbs in English. Some demand that the expression in the object position must stand for an existent item. "Bite", "Ride" and "Hit" are all of this first sort. If A bites, rides or hits B then (as long as A is real and we are talking seriously about the real world) B must be actually existent. But verbs of the second sort do not have any such restriction on their direct objects. Expressions standing in the object position of the second kind of verb need not refer to really existent items. "Want", "Imagine" and "Fear" are verbs of the second sort. A (who is a real human being) can want, imagine or fear B when B does not exist. Both in standard philosophical literature and in common idiom, "see" is taken as an extensional success verb of the first sort, because seeing is a variety of knowing. If the object claimed to be seen does not exist, then the alleged seeing will fail to qualify as knowledge. S sees O when and only when O directly causes S to have, in a specific sense, a matching visual experience. A non-existent O cannot cause any experience, — let alone a matching one — hence it cannot be seen. If this is true, then it seems unidiomatic if not ungrammatical to speak of hallucinations as seeing or even of seeing the angel with a sword in Masaccio's fresco *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve* (at the Brancacci Chapel in Florence) — because there never really was any such angel - and even if there were, it is not the one who bears appropriate causal relationship with our seeing of it in that wall-painting.

Yet, in English usage the word "see" is constantly used in the context of dreams, hallucinations, doubtful borderline cases in between objective and purely subjective visual experiences, to talk about identification of unreal or doubtfully real objects represented in works of art and films. People naturally talk about "seeing" patterns of dancing spots in front of their eyes, "seeing" nymphs and satyrs in their dreams, and "seeing" golden flowers in the sky under the influence of psychedelic drugs - when neither the speaker nor the hearer, even for a moment, has any tendency to believe that such spots, nymphs, satyrs or flowers exist anywhere in any sense. Leonardo da Vinci encouraged aspirant painters to see fighting figures and fantastic landscapes in damp stained walls. He was surely not saying that they should believe or even pretend to believe that fighting people and hills and valleys exist in those walls. This apparent anomaly has given rise to three kinds of reaction among philosophers.

Some philosophers[14] have insisted that there are two distinct senses or uses of the verb "to see". The first is an extensional existence-entailing use, where "A sees (let us mark it off as "$Sees_1$") O as f" entails that there exists an O which A sees but does not entail that O is actually f. The second is an intentional existence-neutral use, where "A sees (let us mark it off as "$Sees_2$") O as f" entails that O is f but does not entail that there exists such an O. "See" then is simply equivocal between $seeing_1$ and $seeing_2$. If we are using "See" in the first sense (See_1), then it is an achievement word like "meet". If Mr X is fictional or long dead, then someone's claim to have $seen_1$ (or met) Mr X just yesterday is either a lie or a mistake or a joke not meant to be true. When, on the other hand one is using "See" in the second sense, it is more like aiming at or desiring, which leaves open the question of existence of what is $Seen_2$ (aimed at, or desired), and indeed often takes it as understood that the object does *not* exist. The conversational context should make it clear which of these two uses of "See" is being intended on a certain occasion. If it does not, then it can result in such awkward communication failure as illustrated by the following exchanges:

(i) Look at the sky. Do you see the grey and silver elephants cuddling each other?
No, I can only see some clouds.
(ii) I saw the same green lion once again when I was dozing off last night.
Nonsense, you could not have seen any such thing, because there aren't any green lions.

It is because we were confusing $seeing_1$ with $seeing_2$ that we felt an anomaly in common usage. It is $seeing_1$ which is a variety - and a very respectable variety — of knowing. $Seeing_2$ is not a species of knowing. It is very much like "wanting" and may even be constituted by a heavy dose of imagination. At least the pictorial version of $seeing_2$ often comes with a studied tendency to turn away from what one knows.[15]

The second response is to deny the legitimacy of the second sense of "seeing", hence the existence of any such ambiguity in "See". The use of "See" in the so-called "existence" neutral-second way in the context of hallucinatory or pictorial "seeing" is either non-serious or non-literal. Most often people stick to the claim that they see pink rats when in a state of drunkenness only as long as they believe mistakenly that the existence-requirement for such rats is satisfied. After they realise their mistake they can go on to describe the hallucinated objects as "seen" in the tongue-in-cheek or abbreviated manner of speaking when all they mean is that they *thought that they saw them*. The error in the usage of "See" is deliberately preserved to give a faithful description of the error in the experience.

> this appeal to "what people ordinarily say" may show nothing more than that people are sometimes mistaken about what it is they see. It certainly does not show, by itself, that there is a sense of the verb "to see" which is *not* governed by the existence condition.[16]

Dretske, who makes the above remarks, argues for the position that the so-called "second kind of use" of the verb "see" is actually a further extension of the single

legitimate use of that verb, namely the first one, with the difference that the existence-condition on the object is consciously held in abeyance by an explicit conversational or behaviourial warning in the appropriate context. The warning comes usually in the form of a prefixed clause like: "I supposed that", "I thought that", "I dreamt that", "It appeared to me that" or "It looked as if", etc. Such clauses, whether mentioned or implied by the pragmatic stance of the speaker, serve to suspend the existence-condition on the direct object of the verb "to see". Unless there were such a condition, it would not need to be waived in special cases. Thus the special cases prove that the same first sense of seeing is still operative even in the apparently recalcitrant use of that tricky verb.

The verb "See" is indeed tricky. To go back to our initial distinction between extensional and intentional verbs: one mark of the extensional verbs is that they can tolerate substitution of the object-expression by a co-referential expression which happens to fit the same object without any change of truth-value of the original sentence. Thus if a policeman has hit a certain drug smuggler and in actual life the drug smuggler is none other than the prime minister's son then the policeman has hit the prime minister's son, whether he knew it or not. Such substitution by a co-referential term can, of course, change the truth-value of sentences using intentional verbs. Thus I can want the smartest-looking watch in the shop. And that watch may in fact turn out to be the least durable one. Yet I might not want the least durable watch. Now, if we apply this criterion, then "seeing" seems to belong rather to the second category than to the first. If I see a dark patch against the foliage which turns out to be my friend's dog, I could not be said to have seen his dog, any more than I can be charged with wilfully shooting at his dog because I aimed my gun at the dark patch against the foliage.[17] Perhaps this ambiguity can be traced back to two distinct senses of the word "object" of sight, rather than to two distinct uses of the verb "See".

Something like that is tried by the third response which could be made to the above conundrum. This is to admit that the existence-requirement on the object of the verb "to see" is never completely lifted away, nor does it apply specially to only one narrow extensional use of that verb. Even in the hallucinatory seeing of a dagger there is something (though it is eventually found out to be a hallucinatory dagger) which is seen.[18] Of course, we do not apply the predicate "... is hallucinatory" inside the hallucination or inside the discourse which treats the visual experience at its face value. It is a predicate like "does not exist" which straddles two levels of discourse, because one needs to specify which specific object was seen that *was not there* to be seen. This strategy of retaining the same univocal use of the verb "See" in all cases by giving it an *existent* object even in the case of a dream, hallucination or pictorial seeing, can be adopted either in an ontologically meddlesome manner by committing ourselves to a series of mental or intentional objects like *sense-data* (and thus getting involved in a Lockean kind of indirect account of all visual perception – veridical as well as non-veridical) or in a less committed fashion by just recognising it as a style of talking about our experiences. To take the second option is to allow ourselves, as it were, to create with our

public use of the referential-predicative patterns of talk using a new kind of item called "phenomenal objects" (objects which some of us at some point had fallen into the error of having seen or objects which we choose to "see" in films, paintings, sculptures, etc) without any tendency to track them down in real life. It should be clear now that I am inclined to endorse this third line of reaction by making room for game (3). Of course, as long as I am playing game (3) with my audience, the waterfall we can all see in Escher's print *exists*. While playing game (3) we are forgetting about laws of gravity and perspective. I have so incorporated myself into the world[19] of the picture, as if I am like those two people depicted by Escher in the same building complex where the waterfall flows (although I am outside the field of "vision"), that the waterfall can be even said to be *causing* my experience *of* the waterfall within the world of the picture. When I come out of game (3), I can see only the print and allow myself to recognise that it would be impossible for a similar waterfall to exist in the actual world. I do not (because I cannot) see such a waterfall when I gaze at the print – as long as I am speaking inside game (1). When, in the master-game, I deny the existence – even the possible existence – of that very (not merely some such) waterfall which I see in Escher's print, I pick out the object seen by first playing game (3) and then deny its existence in the game (1) sense of "existence". The parallel between our use of identifying descriptions for contents of dreams and our talk about what goes on in the world represented by a picture can be further elaborated and deepened.

The ontological involvement of our talk about what a picture depicts can vary along the following three grades when we say that a certain picture P (e.g. *The Annunciation* by Leonardo at the Uffizi) represents the Virgin Mary being blessed by an angel. We could either mean:

(a) P represents that $(\exists x)$ (x is the Virgin Mary and x is being blessed by an angel)
or
(b) $(\exists x)$(P represents that x is the Virgin Mary and x is being blessed by an angel)
or
(c) $(\exists x)$(x is the Virgin Mary and P represents that x is being blessed by an angel).[20]

It is clear that the first would be the sense given to the statement by someone who considers the Virgin Mary to be a figment of imagination and does not want to perceive the figure of Mary in the picture as the figure of the model (a real-life woman who posed for the artist) but as a purely aesthetic fabrication. The second sense will be relevant for the somewhat "scientific" art critic who wishes to identify the depicted object with the historical model but does not wish to get committed to the existence of exactly that which the model is representing (in this case Mary). The third sense will be available to the believer in the historicity of Mary who thinks that angels do not exist but Mary actually did. Analogously, in some dreams we see completely unreal scenes involving absolutely non-real individuals where all the existential quantifications are subjected to the waiver "S dreamed that ..." In a second kind of dream we identify the objects seen with real-life people and places, but the dream experience represents them in unreal garbs or modes of presentation. I can have an existent psychoanalyst who, in my dream, appears *as* some

mythological being, while I keep telling myself that it is the analyst who has assumed this new identity. Or, I can have yet another kind of dream where certain existent objects appear just as they are in real life, but the dream has them interact with a completely nonexistent entity (imagine Woody Allen with his glasses and his unmistakable nervous look appearing in someone's dream where he is kissed by a siren). This will be the dream analogue of the third grade of ontological involvement of our game (3) talk about pictured phenomenal objects, some of which happen to be guests from game (1) who are recognisable as such.

6.5 DEPICTION *versus* DESCRIPTION

Both literary works and pictures make us imagine things and events, many of which never existed or happened. Yet they seem to work on us in fundamentally divergent ways. We feel a difference between verbally described items and visually depicted ones. "But the difference threatens to vanish when we reach for it."[21]

In a sense we have to "look" both at the printed page of a novel and at the painted canvas to find out what is described and depicted in them. But the "looking" in the former case is quite fortuitous. The novel could be heard, the story could be told. And whatever perceptual capacity, visual or auditory, might be needed for our acquaintance with the words of literary fiction does not make our knowledge of the plot perceptual. Our grasp of the meanings of fictional literature is essentially linguistic or word-generated awareness; whereas our grasp of the representational content of pictures is essentially perceptual and non-linguistic.

An obvious result of this is that we can look at Venus in Botticelli's paintings but cannot look at Alyosha in *Brothers Karamazov*. Illustrations added to works of fiction bring in perceptual elements to the predominantly linguistic experience of reading a novel, just as titles added to pictures and sculptures (or words inscribed inside the picture) try to introduce linguistic elements to our predominantly perceptual experience of seeing things in representations.

Still the difference remains elusive because the conventions which help us grasp the meanings of texts and those which enable us to grasp the meanings of pictures seem eminently comparable. The comparison begins at the rhetorical level through the exchange of idioms as in "Van Gogh's eloquent language of colours" or "Tolstoy's broad canvas". But it penetrates the deeper level of philosophical explanation. The notion of resemblance, imitation or similarity which was supposed to be the basis of *pictorial* representation is brought in to explain even the way in which our sentences manage to describe facts. This has been attempted both at the level of words as well as of sentences. However bizarre it might sound, Socrates, in *Cratylas*, considers the view that a name is a verbal mimicking of what we wish to describe. The "mimesis" involved may be of a different order than the vocal or postural mimicry of the cries or movements of birds and beasts playfully done by entertainers. But it is mimesis all the same, an imitation not of the objects' looks or sounds, but – somehow – of their *essences*. This results in the implausible theory that syllables of "primary words" represent basic elements of extra-linguistic entities. A more well-known modern version of the resemblance theory of linguistic

meaning exploits the idea of pictorial representation at the level of sentences: words do not resemble objects. But once the word-object relations are arbitrarily fixed by convention, the arrangement of words in a sentence do represent and resemble the arrangement of objects in states of affairs. This is how we can make up sentence pictures resembling states of affairs which may or may not exist.

While some philosophers were thus bringing language closer to pictorial art, some others have been doing the converse. Even in pictures, we are now told, signs do not naturally resemble the significate. Not any inherent likeness of properties but largely arbitrary cultural conventions are supposed to underlie the fact that certain sorts of configurations of brush strokes are taken as picturing certain states of affairs in the world. Even in pictures, writes Goodman:

> almost anything may stand for almost anything else. A picture that represents – like a passage that describes – an object, refers to and more particularly denotes it. Denotation is the core of representation and is independent of resemblance.[22]

If, in the above ways, description and depiction merge with one another, what will happen to our distinction between game (2) and game (3)? If we have to retain the distinction I draw between fictional discourse and discourse about pictorially identified phenomenal objects, we must somehow salvage the basic insight behind the gut feeling that we "see" phenomenal objects in a way in which we cannot "see" fictional ones. Walton (1973) urges us to treat pictures as props (e.g. blobs of mud in a mud-pie game) in games of make-believe in order to articulate the specially visual nature of pictorial representation — which accounts for the fact that not only can *we* stare at and demonstratively pick out pictured items, even people in pictures can stare or smile at us. An intriguing game of fiction can make fictional people speak to the reader, addressing him or her as "you". On my account, the reader then has to invite himself as a guest into the relevant game (2). But the fictional people (even if they are made to say so) can never stare or wink at the reader as people from paintings can do. Words do not have faces. I do not want to repeat Walton's arguments and distinctions here. Just as the claim to *see* Venus emerging from a sea shell (in Botticelli's painting) evoked the challenge: "There must then exist something which you see as Venus, etc," similarly if we take resemblance-based depiction too literally we might be baffled by the anxiety: "If the painting or part of it resembles a goddess there must exist a goddess which it resembles."

Goodman and his followers try to answer this by the device of rephrasing "P is a picture of a unicorn" as "P is a unicorn-picture" – where in the latter formulation "unicorn-picture" is an unbreakable predicate expression. I have referred to this strategy in the last chapter. It is on the basis of this strategy that Walton builds up his distinction between P-depiction and depiction$_q$. If, from the fact that a picture depicts a woman, it can be correctly inferred that there exists a woman which the picture depicts (our third grade of ontological commitment in the last section), then Walton would call that a case of depiction$_q$. Where no such existential conclusion can be drawn, namely – in one of our Zeus-depicting pictures, unicorn-depicting pictures and some-indefinite-man-depicting sculptures – the depiction in question

will count as P-depiction. But, as we notice further on, for P-depiction of a certain unicorn jumping to be possible there must be a game of make-believe such that it will be a make-believe truth – symbolised by Walton as starred propositions written in the following manner: *That unicorn is jumping* which will hold by virtue of the *visually* identifiable features of the picture. Some complicated account of *pretence-that* and intentional identity will be needed to explain how we can reidentify the same unicorn or the same hallucinated woman across such different pictorial contexts. Whether we can actually supply such a satisfactory account or not, let us search for one in the next section.

6.6 THE GIRL GEACH DREAMT OF ON N-NIGHT

An item which is first identified in a visual experience and then said to be non-existent deserves the status of an "appearing unreal". Apart from my suspiciously liberal use of the concept of "visual experience", it might look as if I am trying to bring too many different kinds of visible items under this umbrella concept of phenomenal objects (many of which turn out to be appearing unreals). Examples have been used from nearly all of the following six distinguishable classes:

(i) Things seen in films.
(ii) Objects make-believedly identified in natural phenomena like clouds, ocean waves, gnarled tree-trunks, constellations of stars, stained walls, etc.
(iii) Objects intentionally depicted by and seen in paintings, sculptures and other man-made artifacts.
(iv) Things seen in dreams.
(v) Things seen in hallucinations
(vi) Things visualised in self-induced daydreams.

Now it is tempting to group our discourse about (i) through (iii) under one type of talk while putting together our speaking about things of types (iv) through (vi) into a separate group. Even if no *logical* distinction can be drawn between intentional objects of roughly hallucinatory seeing and those of roughly representational seeing on the basis of the psychological factor of being or not being actually duped or taken in by the experience, at least the existence of real publicly observable "props"[23] (such as the physical object the picture happens to be – paper or canvas, the projected light on a cinema screen, the slab of marble or wood etc.) in the first three types of visual experience seems to drive a logical wedge between the two sorts of discourse.

First, it seems more appropriate to construe representational seeing (whether it is as compelling as cinematographic representation or gives the viewer as much free reign as the imaginative cloud-gazer enjoys) as *existentially conservative*. There exists something even outside the game of make-believe, namely the props, in virtue of the actual properties of which make-believe propositions can then be generated and to some extent verified within the world of the picture. It is because someone goes and kisses a particular part of the chunk of marble (e.g. Michelangelo's *Pieta* at St Peter's in Rome) that we can say, in game (3), that she kissed the feet of the Virgin Mary. In contrast, we cannot base or paraphrase our talk about the contents of dreams and hallucinations in terms of some actual features of any such existent items. There is nothing, as it were, to screen dreams on.

Second, an account in terms of "pretence that" seems more plausible as an explanation of our discourse about objects we can "see" representationally than for our talk about items in dreams. The man who is describing how the satyr hidden behind the knees of the drunken Bacchus is impishly nibbling at the bunch of grapes (in the context of describing Michelangelo's *Bacchus*) can be said to *pretend* that he is seeing all these movements in that piece of marble. But where exactly does the dream-describer's pretence come in? Is he pretending to describe what he actually experienced or is he actually describing what he pretended to experience? Neither seems quite the right description of his activity. This intuitive unsuitability of the "pretence" account for objects seen in dreams, etc. has something to do with the fact that there is nothing in the actual dream experience (and correspondingly in a first-person or derived description of it) *about* which the dreamer can be said to pretend that *it* is something else. Getting or not getting caught up or involved is, therefore, not the only or even the most important factor which distinguishes games of make-believe (such as children's games with dolls and toys, etc.) from delusion or non-delusive hallucinations. Films and tricks of lighting can be really delusive while daydreams are usually deliberate to begin with. Even pictures and models can dupe some viewers, whereas hallucinations can be detectable as such and yet experienced. So the real distinction, it seems, issues from the existence or nonexistence of actual props.

What if we concede this fundamental divide between classes of game (3)? Even the items of game (1) or game (2) for that matter are not all of a piece. Walton himself uses this point to generate a distinction between two types of fictional truths, namely imaginary truths and make-believe truths, the first being the "prop-less" ones. But there is a deeper worry. A language-game must essentially be publicly playable. Even inside game (3), my reference to the half-goat, half-human satyr succeeds in picking out a particular mythical being only because you can also point to it — the same satyr – at least in the context of the same sculpture. One viewer can ask another whether she has seen the same angel as he has seen in a painting where an angel is shown as showering flowers on Shelley. Without such possibility of reidentification and co-reference, one could not make any sense of my claim that there is a language-game in which my use of the expression "that angel" – even in the sentence "That angel is unreal, while that poet did exist" – counts as a use of a singular term. Now this co-reference is secured not merely in terms of our *intending* to speak of the same object, etc. (because how do we know *that* about each other?) but in terms of our reference working via the same prop: the painting itself as a material object or a more precise place on its surface which both I and you are in a position to point at. Given the absence of such outside props in the case of hallucinatory experiences of all sorts, the question arises: how can my references to what I – or, more problematically, someone else "saw" in a vision or a dream – succeed in picking out anything so that we can carry on even a non-earnest language-game about it?

True, we can introduce and reuse names for objects seen in dreams. It is also unnecessary to succumb to the Russellian pressure of looking upon such proper names as abbreviations of these very introducing descriptions. If Geach tells us that he calls the girl he dreamt of on N-night "Pauline"[24] we can go on to talk about Pauline. But Geach insists that if Pauline is an imaginary girl (as opposed to a living or dead real person) then dreaming of her will be indistinguishable from dreaming of no girl at all (i.e. from not dreaming of a girl). He supports this thesis with the following remarks which seem to threaten my own proposal:

> If anyone says that [in case Pauline is an imaginary girl] the girl did exist "in my dream" then I reply that at any rate [in case he dreamt of no girl at all] the girl does exist right now "in my discourse" ... We do well here to heed the small voice that whispers "Bosh!"

But I think Geach got carried away in this glib passage in moving from an imaginary girl to no girl at all. Surely when one is saying that one dreamt of no girl at all, one is not even playing a dream-describing language-game where any allegedly particular girl is even make-believedly alluded to. In fact the discourse specifically denies that any girl is even being discussed in any context. So there is no question of a particular girl existing in Geach's discourse. Surely "no girl" is not an expression even purportedly referring to an individual, unless we make it a proper name like "NOMAN" and introduce the name "NOGIRL" by means of the following stipulation: the girl Geach hallucinated as standing in front of his desk on several occasions when he worked till late at night is to be known as NOGIRL. In that case NOGIRL *would* function as a referring expression inside game (3).

Later on in the same essay Geach does make room for the concept of a *quasi-name* which can be introduced by a definite description which alludes to purely hallucinatory dream experiences. Thus, if a dreamer claims to reidentify the *same* unreal person, building or river across different episodes of dreaming and gives the person or object a name, our use of that name can go back to his use and thus succeed as much or as little as his own employment of that name.

Now the question "when are two people thinking or talking about the same imaginary object?" is an extremely tough and puzzling one. But the very fact that it can be *asked* (and was asked by Moore[25]) shows that any theory which equates dreaming of a particular mermaid with dreaming of nothing at all must be wrong. Of course, from the point of view of actual-world talk or game (1), the reference to a particular visually identified mermaid – whether dreamt or depicted – makes very little sense. Just because within game (3) we take dream talk or film talk as if it were description of the actually experienced world we have to agree in conversation to distinguish between this particular angel and that particular mermaid, between this particular haunted house which Sally keeps having nightmares about and that other old building which looks similar but which John has identified in his daydreams as the house where a princess is imprisoned. Of course some questions will remain unanswerable even in contexts where there exist props like pictures, e.g. "Is the Satyr painted by Titian and the one depicted by Michelangelo the same?" But others will have definite answers. And we can use Moore's own hard-headed causal criterion for intentional identity here, with certain modifications. We could say that both your use of a certain name of a phenomenal object and my use of that name refer to the same (possibly unreal) item if, and only if, either both of them are causally traceable back to the same dream experience, or the same picture, or the same act of representational interpretation of some natural shapes (all these being different ways of fleshing out Moore's blanket term "A's and B's *conception* of the definite description-involving proposition") or one of them is derived from the other's experience, or interpretation or act of depiction, etc. This still leaves a lot of subtle issues to be solved. But we cannot afford to give up the notion of intentional identity and game-relative identification. The existence or nonexistence of publicly identifiable props hardly makes a difference. In the absence of any other object the *utterance* of a dream-describer or hallucinator himself can be taken as that object about which we pretend that it expresses a certain informative proposition about what happened inside the dream when no such proposition or state of affairs is any part of the actual world. The exact nature of this pretence is of course extremely hard to capture. The analogy with children's games of make-believe has both good and bad sides. Its bad side is that it tends to make the existence of props essential for publicly available make-believe reference to be secured. Within games of pretence of different sorts, derived or story-relative identification is as much respectable as singular references by a one-off eyewitness of a past event are for subsequent historians who derive their reference from such a reporter's document. To be *inside* game (3) is to forget, for the time being, that Geach only *dreamt* of Pauline. Geach's report of the dream is make-believedly trusted as a first-hand report of experience. To refuse to give the status of a name to "Pauline" (while we are playing this game), therefore, is to slip back to Russell's mistake that only names of what one is oneself immediately acquainted with are logically proper.

6.7 ON WONDERING IF THIS/THAT IS/WAS REAL

In expressing our uncertainty and wonderment as to what a certain visually discriminated *it* actually is, we often entertain alternatives which are of radically different ontological categories: "Is that an island, a ship, a cloud, an effect of light or just an after-image?" we might ask, pointing by "that" to a dim, unidentified shape over the horizon.[26] We might ignore the distinctions between the criteria of identity of ships and clouds, but, definitely, effects of light and after-images are ontologically of a completely different status – if they have any ontological status at all. It is this rather liberal category-stretch which demonstratives with visual backing seem to enjoy that encourages the idea that we might take statements like "*This* does not exist" or "*It* does not exist" or questions like "Was *that* real?" at their face value and find some existence-neutral category of objects to back up such uses of "this", "that" or "it".

Without much philosophical reflection, I feel fairly certain that I often make existential judgements immediately after a dream dissolves with clear and distinct reference to seen items, some of which I often find contingently (or even necessarily) nonexistent. The other night in my dream I saw an U.F.O., even touched a part of it and told my friends about it who, in the dream, came and also saw it. I was sure the

next morning that *that* U.F.O. – I can still recall seeing it vividly – was unreal, whereas the friends I "saw" were quite real (though they were *not* then *there*).

The pretence-account would want to solve the problem about these clear cases of seeing what is recognised to be unreal by showing how these are only phoney claims of seeing something. When a child playfully pretends to give me a biscuit, he is correctly described as make-believedly giving me a biscuit without there being anything which he actually gave me and which was make-believedly a biscuit. The game of make-believe might be called existentially *creative*. And if I then remark, "I saw the biscuit in his hand although there was none", I can justly be interpreted as using "see" for "pretend that I am seeing".[27] But in the dream case there is no reason to call the seeing "a make-believe seeing"; the visual experience of dreaming does not involve any pretence. Let us get back to our original analysandum: the question, "Is that dim shape a ship, a cloud, an effect of light or just an after-image?"

The inclusion of the possibility "or is it an effect of light" shows that the reference to the dim shape might be, in some sense, existentially creative as well. Saying that some object is nothing but a trick of light is too close to committing such an object to sheer nonexistence. If the identifying description "that dim shape" carried an implicit claim that whatever it might be that is demonstrated, it will at least be a spatio-temporally locatable shaped object with a definite contour, then how can it turn out to be a trick of light, occurring possibly in a place quite different from where the dim shape is seen? The statement "It is *merely* a trick of light" thus serves the purpose of a negative existential, although the reference to the clearly seen dim shape makes it undeniably singular. Once we accept this, we have to face the question: "To what does the "it" in such a denial of objectivity refer?" And the simple answer to it will be: "To a phenomenal object, an item of game (3)." What is being investigated by the inquirer is whether it is a native of that game or an immigrant from game (1).

It is possible for us to genuinely refer by the use of the pronoun "it" even though we are not sure what general sort of thing we thereby refer to. This typically occurs in contexts where the whole point of the remark is that we do not know what kind of a thing *it* is. "I have as it were at my command a singling out description, *viz.*, "Whatever it is I see as a dim shape on the horizon" – but it is not one that commits me to any sortal classification of particular individuals, for again the point of my remark is that I cannot supply a principle of individuation except that it occupies the focus of my visual field in some sense."[28]

But to conclude from this that such referential "it"s commit us to any mysterious class of neutral particulars, one of which can itself, logically, possibly *be* either a ship or a cloud, etc. will be overhasty. No particular, however nonspecifically identified, can correctly be said to retain its numerical identity while changing its type across clouds, islands and tricks of light or after-images. To solve the problem we can try out a scope distinction. The claim which can be easily justified by commonsense,

> I see something as a dim shape which could, logically, possibly be a ship or a cloud (or a trick of light, etc.)

is not to be parsed as

> $(\exists x)$ [(I saw x as a dim shape) and $\Diamond$ $(\exists y)$ (y is a ship and $x = y$) and $\Diamond$ $(\exists z)$] (z is a cloud and $x = z$)

but as

> $(\exists x)$ (I saw x as a dim shape at t) and $\Diamond$ $(\exists x)$ (x is a ship and $(\forall y)$ (I saw y as a dim shape at t $\rightarrow x = y$)) and $\Diamond$ $(\exists x)$ (x is a cloud and $(\forall y)$ (I saw y as a dim shape $\rightarrow x = y$)).

Cleverly retaining the claim of identity, this might provide us some solace in the contexts of suspected misperception or illusion where the seen object exists, but the only trouble is with metaphysically incompatible sortals under which it is alternatively experienced. But what if the uncertainty expressed is so radical that the alternative categories span existent and nonexistent, objective and subjective, real and imaginary objects? The initial existential quantifier has either to be dropped or to be given a proto-Meinongian interpretation. Efforts at dissolving the problem by dismissing all such sights as "merely claimed seeings" or "pretended seeings" will prove unsuccessful. The "seeing" part of the experience can be as compelling and as guileless as possible. Notice James's emphasised remark:

> An hallucination is a strictly sensational form of conciousness, as good and true a sensation as if there were a real object there. The object happens not to be there, that is all.[29]

The crux is this. How can we be fair to the fact that we use the same referential repertoire in both describing the content of a suspected hallucination as well as in exposing its hallucinatory nature? Instead of introducing new senses of "seeing", or treating our names for seen nonexistents as disguised descriptions (by doing this we do not actually refer to particular items but only to our own or other people's intention to refer to them), we can offer a neater picture of the situation in terms of the games. The singular expressions indefinitely or definitely descriptive or demonstrative, nominal or pronominal, gain their reference in the context of game (3) where both private intentional entities like dreamt of girls or hallucinated serpents, and public ones like film animals or painted monsters are allowed to behave like directly or representationally experience-causing existent extensional items. The situation changes radically when we move from game (3) to Game* to *evaluate* the experience and pronounce upon the status of the items identified. We still use names and demonstratives to pick them out but this time (thanks to our being in Game*), it is in a neutral fashion as items which could possibly retain their identity through game (3) and game (1) had they been immigrants from reality.

There is no *prima facie* reason why we should always say that what is seen (as a game (3) item) can at most be founded on, or anchored in, or be caused by or be a part of the surface of a physical object. At least our common speech patterns take it for granted that the appearing item can itself *be* a physical object, not in the sense that it can become or grow into one but in the sense that it might be discovered to have been one from the very beginning. When it is discovered not to be so, a negative existential is issued about it.

The point we have been labouring is this. As far as our linguistic expressions of their phenomenological content goes, hallucinations do not differ from the sighting of actual objects in the "seeing" aspect of it. They are called "mistaken" in so far as they arouse in us false existential hopes about their actually nonexistent objects. The object seen (and referred to in the subsequent rejection of the accompanying false belief) is a native item (of game (3)) which can be deemed nonexistent (in Game*) because it *is* a ghost, a Dracula, a fantasy palace, an impossible waterfall. If it were not any of these things but were to be reduced to some other kind of intentionally or extensionally existent object (e.g. an image, a sense-datum, or a falsely characterized remembered entity), we could not take negative existentials about visually identified items at their face value. The idea of game (3) is only an accessible picture to make our referential idiom about painted, filmed, dreamt, and hallucinated objects intelligible. The notion of "seeing" which is appealed to is undoubtedly very much extended but it is not larger than the ordinary, language concept of "seeing". The ontology or epistemology of artistic objects or erroneous experiences should be kept as far as possible independent of this exercise in the philosophy of language.

6.8 A SLIGHTLY TWISTED *WINTER'S TALE*

To test the strength of the "games" framework as an interpretive device, let us consider the plot of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* – treating, for the sake of the example, the text of the play as if it were real history or game (1). We shall, however, introduce one big change in the plot in order to avoid entanglement with the separate issue of no longer existent entities, seeing or seeming to see ghosts etc.

Let Leontes think (somewhat like Hanold in *Gradiva*) that Hermione is a completely imaginary entity (rather than his dead wife) while in point of fact she is a real woman. He might have actually seen a charming lady from a distance in an overcrowded banquet whilst drunk and mistakenly thought that he was merely hallucinating. Then he might have commissioned a statue, providing a vivid description (or even drawings) of the Hermione of his fantasy. The sculptor, unknown to Leontes, does not execute the statue, but produces the real woman who, contrary to Leontes' belief, actually exists. At the end of the story Leontes stands in front of Hermione thinking that he is looking at her statue. The climax is reached when he touches "the statue" to find that "she lives! she is real!" Now the statue itself is a game (3) item in our description of Leontes' delusion. Leontes imagines that he is seeing a statue when there is no statue at all. We can say in (Game*) that the statue does not exist because in game (1) there is only Leontes and standing in front of him a live woman, namely Hermione; there is no statue. For Leontes, as long as the illusion persists, it is the other way around: the statue is real and Hermione is purely phenomenal (in our sense of the term). Now let us imagine Leontes consciously playing game (3) (this will be game (3) embedded in the bigger game (3) which we play in describing the content of Leontes' illusion) by talking of Hermione as "*seen in*" the statue. He would talk, *connivingly*, or in a poetic

metaphorical way, of Hermione's smile, *her* (not the statue's) soft curves, etc. with the (mistaken) awareness that he is talking only about what the statue represents. We know that by making these game (3) statements, he is actually making statements which are, unknown to himself, correct moves inside game (1). The two game (3)'s, one embedded within another, seem to cancel out. When, finally, he realises his mistake (the rather unusual mistake of taking reality for fancy), what he realises is not that a game (3) item was *based on* a game (1) item, but that what he *took to be* a material object – the statue – looking so exactly like Hermione that he could *pretend* that it was she herself, was actually *identical* with a game (1) item, namely Hermione. This does not make Hermione cease to be a game (3) item as well because, after all, she does trivially look like herself. She just emigrated, first as a statue and then as herself, in two telescoped language games of visual pretence. Every game (1) item has the capacity to figure as an immigrant to game (3) in so far as each physical object can be seen by someone as something looking like itself, or as representing itself in a film or painting.

Hermione is known to be a native of game (1) migrating to game (3). The statue, however, is a native of game (3) which was, as usual, mistaken for a game (1) object. As the illusion is dispelled, the statue transpires to be merely the phenomenal item of game (3), which Leontes never knowingly plays but which *we* play, when we talk connivingly about *his* delusions. With Leontes being pleasantly brought back to reality in this way, a couple of master-game statements are called for – one affirmative (namely "Hermione whom I thought I was only hallucinating exists") and one negative (namely "The statue which I thought I saw does not exist"). We could trivially remark, "Hermione exists", speaking purely within the (alleged) game (1). But that speech act should be distinguished from the act of first identifying Hermione within Leontes' game of make-believe, then coming out of the game (3) and announcing that the phenomenal item which Leontes thought he was seeing in "the statue" happens itself to be available in game (1). This last context-straddling, non-trivial information is conveyed by a master-game move.

NOTES

[1] See *Jensen's Gradiva*: Standard Edition. Freud's *Complete Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 1–95.

[2] "The experience of reading a novel .... is not much like the experience we would have if we were present at the action the novel describes, and so we have little tendency to describe reading in terms of seeing characters" (G. Currie in "Visual Fictions" (p. 141) *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 41. No. 163. April 1991.

[3] I am aware of the standard usage of the adjective "phenomenal" for qualia or sense data and I distinguish my use clearly below.

[4] Moore shows characteristic clear-headedness about this when he writes: "Nobody supposes that the drunkard's sense impressions are unreal: it is only the snakes he sees which are unreal and his impressions are not the snakes he sees". "'Real" and "Imaginary'", *Lectures in Philosophy*, p. 42.

[5] Chisholm (1989) quotes from Meinong two interesting examples of auditory hallucinations.

[6] "Visual Fictions", *Philosophy Quarterly*, April 1991, pp. 136–140.

[7] See H.D. Lewis's penetrating discussion, "Private and Public Space" especially *vis-à-vis* hallucinations in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol: LIII, 1953, pp. 79–94.
[8] For the source of this turn of phrase see p. 423 of *Walton's Mimesis As Make Believe*. Also see the famous Gareth Evans' paragraph in Section 10.4 (p. 369) of *Varieties of Reference*.
[9] The Minotaur is not strictly a game (3) item because its birthplace is in game (2). Greek fable about this half-bull half-human demon who lived inside a labyrinth.
[10] See *Varieties of Reference*, p. 358.
[11] See Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects*, Essay V, pp. 209–13 for the reasons for correcting his own views on this matter.
[12] More or less the same distinction is drawn by D.W. Smith (*Is This a Dagger I see Before Me*? 1983) who calls them naive, neutral and "hip" hallucinations respectively.
[13] See *Film and the Dream Screen* by Robert T. Eberwein, Princeton, (1984).
[14] See, for example, Ayer (1956, reprinted 1977), p. 99.
[15] The judgement of a painter's eye, writes Leonardo, "is like a mirror which imitates all the things before it *without knowledge of them*".
[16] Dretske (1969), p. 45, *Seeing and Knowing*.
[17] See Anscombe, *The Intentionality of Sensation*, pp. 11–20 in *Collected Philosophical Papers, Volume II*.
[18] See Austin's footnote to p. 95 of *Sense and Sensibility*. "Well, if I say that cousin Josephine once saw a ghost, even if I go on to say I don't 'believe in' ghosts, whatever that means, I can't say that ghosts don't exist *in any sense at all*. For there was in *some sense*, this ghost that Josephine saw."
[19] See part six of *"Works and Worlds of Art"* (1980) by Nicholas Wolterstorff for a detailed discussion of the concept of the *world* of a picture.
[20] See Howell (1974), pp. 76–109 for these three senses of representation.
[21] Walton (1973), p. 283. See also Terence Parsons (1980) p. 208. "The account of what happens in the story comes to us primarily in propositional form – we construct the account from a series of sentences – whereas the account of what happens in the dream comes to us by gestalt; it must be constructed by interpreting a continuum of global impressions, images, feelings etc."
[22] Goodman (1976), p. 5.
[23] See Walton (1973) p. 300. "I propose regarding pictures as props in games of make believe."
[24] See Geach *The Perils of Pauline*, (1981) pp. 153–65.
[25] See "Real and Imaginary", *Lectures on Philosophy* (1966) pp. 29–42.
[26] See Strawson (1974), pp. 85–107.
[27] Perhaps a pretence-theory will have some plausibility in the context of our reference to dramatic characters impersonated by real-life people. "Pretend to take *x* for *y*" will not, however, explain the make-believe involved in watching films. "One important difference between dolls and the screen images is that the dolls generate *de re* make-believe truths about themselves and the images do not. The doll is such that make-believedly *it* is a baby that is being dressed up for a trip to town. But a screen image is not such that make-believedly *it* (the image itself) is a green slime." See Walton (1978a), p. 18, fn. 14.
[28] This sentence is quoted from Professor Strawson's unpublished Oxford lecture notes.
[29] The Principles of Psychology. Vol II, pp. 115.

CHAPTER 7
THE MARVEL OF THE MASTER-GAME

A man once said: ... If you only followed the parables you yourselves would become parables and with that rid of all your daily cares.
Another said: I bet that is also a parable.
The first said: You have won.
The second said: But unfortunately only in parable.
The first said: No, in reality! In parable you have lost.

Franz Kafka, *On Parables*

7.01 QUESTIONING THE EXISTENCE OF WHAT?

A certain hang-over from a humourless philosophy of language made us suppose that the question of the actual existence of a thing must be settled, and settled positively, *before* we can make any kind of singular reference to the thing. If such was the requirement for singular reference, then asking *about* a single thing whether it is (or was) actually existent should have been either senseless or pointless. Yet singular existence-wonderment is constantly entertained and expressed. After we have come across a clear mention of a certain specific item, listened to stories about it, seen a drawing of it, etc., we go on to ask seriously and coherently. "Does *it* exist?" "Is *it* real?" Indeed, it now seems obvious that the question of existence (as against the question of whether some complex property has any exemplifier) can arise significantly only *after* and never before reference has been made to, and some predication has been made about, the very item whose existence can be affirmed, denied or doubted.

The last three chapters were mainly concerned with explaining how our predicative talk about such non-real or doubtfully real items can take place inside the context of a verbally rigged-up frame of fiction or of a visually backed-up framework of describing what went on in a picture, film, dream or hallucination. In this chapter we come to the crucial shift from the inside-the-make-believe point of view of either game (2) or game (3) to the outside point of view of real-world discourse. As I have repeatedly pointed out, it is only by this straddling across the two territories that we can ask, somewhat like a philistine,

Does this object described, depicted, imagined or dreamt to be of such and such character – really exist outside the relevant game of pretence?

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 171–195.

The idea was this: the first part of this interrogative utterance gains significance and reference in game (2) or game (3), the second part which comes after the dash gets its meaning and extension in game (1) (or in some cases game (4)), but this whole act of asking a question is performed as a move in the master-game or Game*.

Inside game (2) the game of "let's pretend" that Conan Doyle plays with us, Holmes exists as a flesh and blood human individual. His character – *qua* a fictional character – exists outside that game as an abstract literary item of game (4) since Conan Doyle made it into one.[1] But in what sense does he (the famous detective) *not* exist?

I have reserved this – which is for me the most fundamental issue – along with other related questions like: "Can we say that Holmes might have existed, given that he does not?" for treatment in this chapter.

The reason for considering them separately is threefold. First, these questions, especially the question concerning the analysis of F_3-type statements which are not true inside the story yet seem to make us inextricably involved in the referential resources of the story-world, deserve to be highlighted as of unique interest from the point of view of philosophical logic.

Second, we need to discuss the question (of both negative and affirmative existential statements) in a wider perspective than just the fictional context. We want to generalise the account given of Holmes's nonexistence (and, for that matter, of the informatively affirmable *existence* of Paddington Station) also to cover, for example, our announcement of nonexistence or existence of certain perceptually identified or otherwise once-believed objects. With this issue we want to go back to our general question: *Can we refer to an item successfully in order to question or deny its existence*?

Third (as already indicated in Chapter 1), our answer to this basic question takes us to a long overdue detailed analysis of the master-game. We have discussed alternative accounts of singular existential statements in Chapter 2, which ended with a blunt and cryptic statement of my own picture of the matter in terms of the master-game. I must now fulfil my promise to flesh out that idea by retracing the polemical steps by which I arrived at it.

7.1 GUEST ITEMS FROM OTHER GAMES

Parsons distinguishes between *native* and *immigrant* objects with regard to a particular story.[2] Though intuitively evident, the distinction cannot be very strictly defined. If an object is referred to *for the first time* in the context of a certain story, then it is native to that story. Thus, Rosencrantz is native to *Hamlet* but an immigrant to Tom Stoppard's play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.* Sir Galahad and the Holy Grail are native to the Arthurian legends but immigrants in Robert Young's science fiction story, *A Knyght Ther Was* (1963). But should we say that Sherlock Holmes is native to the first Holmes story Conan Doyle wrote but immigrant to all the following ones? Or should we say that he is native to the entire corpus (because, after all, reference to him becomes more fleshed out as the corpus

builds up and the *final entity* to whom reference has always been made comes to be known only as we go through the whole series) but immigrant only to a story written by someone else (who might fabricate a plot involving an aged Holmes advising a young Hercule Poirot)?

Such decisions can wait. Parsons himself applies the notion of immigrants to other cases more important than just guests moving from one fictional context to another. He talks of real items migrating into fictional contexts, such as London in the Holmes stories, or Napoleon in *War* and *Peace*. Before noticing how that gets us into trouble, let us briefly note that we can have guests of all other kinds. We can dream of fictional and mythical items, and thus have game (2) guests in game (3). We can surely have guests from game (4) in game (2) in so far as fictional people may be found to have real religions, subscribe to real-world political ideologies like Marxism or Fascism, paint in actual styles, love real symphonies, and, of course, there can be genuine reference to numbers, theorems, scientific theories and literary abstract objects inside game (2).[3] One is initially inclined to think that one can write a fiction in which some items are actually guests from game (3), i.e. dreamt of or repeatedly hallucinated objects. This is surely to be distinguished from visions or dreams inside the story where the *story says* that some items are merely phenomenal. Macbeth's dagger is not a guest item in this sense. We have to take care of such fictional phenomenal, fictional fictional, phenomenal fictional (e.g., items mentioned in a story one is told in a dream) or phenomenal phenomenal (an object dreamt of in a dream within a dream or a painting depicting the "object" of someone's hallucination or dream) objects in terms of the possibility of playing one game inside another in an irreversible order of embedding.

But we often hear about a novelist's having a long dream or a repeated vision which he then converts into a fictional character. I am not sure that it is logically quite safe to say in such cases that it is the dream item itself which has migrated into the world of fiction, rather than a native of the fictional world which is intimately related to or based on that dream item. There is a certain arbitrariness or freedom about the way fictional work is written which makes it very difficult to say that any veridically or non-verdically perceived (in both cases the involuntary and compulsive character of the perceptual experience is common) item itself becomes a fictional item. We do not know where to draw the line between a story about real (or perceived) items which none the less gives them wildly unreal *properties* (histories and topographies) and a story about certain completely *imaginary items* which are made to bear very strong resemblances (property-wise) to some real items.[4] Eventually it all depends upon the express intent of the author. Even Parsons seems to vacillate about the question of whether apparent reference to real items in fiction should be taken at face value:

> Now there are those who think that the real London does not appear in those stories, but rather that another object does; it's a fictional object, called "London" in the story, and it is different from the real London. Let me call it a "surrogate" of London. I think these people are half right.[5]

Parson's official view is that it is not a mere fictional copy or counterpart but the original London itself to which the Holmes stories or the text of *David Copperfield* make reference. But he does not want to deny that sometimes, in literary criticism,

we invoke a surrogate entity like "the London of Dickens", i.e. the nonexistent city of which all that is related in the novel is *true*. Suppose that it is proved by historical research that 221B Baker Street was a bank at the time in which the stories specify that Holmes lived there. From this we can either conclude that corresponding to the real item of 221B Baker Street in London there is a fictional clone, 221B Baker Street in Holmes's London, and while the former was a bank, the latter was a private house; or we might decide to hold that they are the same item, only what the story says about the item *is not true*. I opt for the second conclusion. Parsons rightly wonders why we should not say the latter for fear of certain story-statements being false about the real world:

... it is not clear to me why one should generally expect the sentences of a fictional work to be true.[6]

Entertaining exaggerations and jokes provide fine examples of purportedly untrue accounts about actually existent things. Imagine a television advertisement where we find, say, a unicorn repairing its broken horn with some brand of superglue or a patently fantastic cartoon giant drinking *Horlicks* to get extra energy, where it is crucial that the fictional advertisements be taken as being strictly about the real products.

In spite of such strong intuitive evidence in support of the view that the *same* item can participate as a referent both in games (1) and (2), we find some philosophers holding the opposite view. A reviewer comments:

the position Parsons and many others adopt – that real things themselves are often characters in fictional work seems to me a byproduct of a view of fiction which does not sufficiently distinguish it from reportage.[7]

We do not have much to fear from such criticisms. For Parsons, such a "reporting-the-nuclear-characteristics-of-certain-fictional-items" view of fictional discourse entailed certain problems because he did not look upon the description of fictional items as a separate kind of linguistic act governed by additional conventions. Instead, he wanted to view it as continuous with a description of real items. He, therefore, had to adopt rules like the following:

A nonexistent can have a nuclear relational property involving an existent, but an existent cannot have a nuclear relational property involving a nonexistent.

Thus, even if in a film Woody Allen (or whoever he played the role of) tries to shoot Napoleon, Napoleon need not have been a person Woody Allen attempted to shoot. With our picture of the different language-games licensing different sets of truths, we can avoid such *ad hoc* devices. We can say that it is also true that Napoleon *is* someone whom, *in the relevant film-game*, Woody Allen wanted to shoot.

Some narratives actively incorporate their real-life authors (with no new identity) into the fictional world. The author falls in love with his fictional heroine and sleeps with her, producing an (ontologically) illigitemate son who grows up to be a novelist and writes about his father giving him an abominable character. The author of such a fiction invites himself *twice* as a guest into game (2), once as the lover of the fictional woman and then as the person a fictional novelist writes about.

But even with our distinction between game (1) and a game of make-believe – which might borrow some items from the former but can ascribe to it properties which it does not have in reality – we face the following sort of grave problems.

Take the mud-pie game with which Walton illustrates his theory of make-believe truths. It is particularly appropriate in this context because it is, to use Evans's phrase (already introduced in Section 6.3 above), existentially conservative (i.e., in it, from "*Make-believedly the pie is sweet*" we can extract "*There is something such that make-believedly it is a pie and it is sweet*" – as long as there is a mud glob to support the "*There is something*" which lies outside the make-believe operator).[8] A fictional context with some guests from reality is certainly more comparable to an existentially conservative game than one with no such guest. Playing the mud-pie game, a child may pretend to wipe his hands with a tissue (after *make-believedly* eating the pie) by using a real tissue. If he describes his action inside the game he can now genuinely refer to it as a real tissue even in the context of the mock feast. Can't we now say that though the pie he ate does not exist, the tissue he wiped his hands with did?

However smooth that might seem, the question of existence cannot be answered independently of the question of identity, and the latter, in its turn, is inextricably bound up with property-based identification. We could not find the game (2) item (let us the call the mud-pie game fictional in the widest Walton sense), *the pie* itself, in game (1), even if the glob which the children made motions of eating from was there, because the glob did not have the properties of a pie. Should we not say that *that particular tissue*, with which the child wiped his hands in the relevant game (2) sense, must be one on which stains or crumbs of the pie itself should be found? But the tissue bears mud stains rather pie stains. Doesn't that throw some fresh suspicions against the identity theory and in favour of the counterpart theory?

The motivation for never wanting to identify an item of one game with that of another, i.e. to prohibit the sharing of items between games, becomes stronger as we come to the game-crossing affirmative existentials about items of game (3), i.e. immediate objects of perceptual experience (as yet unjudged to be veridical or non-veridical).

Suppose we look, from a considerable distance, at a pair of moving contours in very dim light and identify them as two little boys running towards us; we subsequently find out that one of them *really* was a human child, while the other was just a shadow or a trick of light. Suppose one of us realises this earlier than the others and tells us – meaning to inform – "That$_1$ boy exists but that$_2$ one does not" (clarifying the distinction between "that$_1$" and "that$_2$" by appropriate indexical cues, e.g., pointing slightly to the left and slightly to the right, etc.)

In the first conjunct, as in the second, we have identified the boy as the boy-seeming object of perception. It is about the second boy-seeming object of game (3) that I use the "that$_2$" and say that it is not available for reference (as a three-dimensional live item) in game (1). The singular negative existential looks smooth. But what about the affirmative part concerning *that*$_1$ boy? Which of the following two paraphrases of the affirmative existential is more accurate?

"That item (the boy-seeming object) is *based* on a real boy" or

"That item *is* a real boy.

Is not what I say about the phenomenal referent of "that$_1$ boy" this: that that item itself *is* an item of game (1) and hence exists absolutely? Yet, how can we say that?

Apparently we can use referring demonstratives, in advance of fixing the exact sortal-concept, under which to bring the referent (a human body or a shaped shadow)[9] precisely in order to pose the very question, "*What sort of an item is THAT?*"[10]

But however ambiguous our identifying references might be, the actual item referred to (about which we then ask whether it is a boy or a shadow) can either be a trick of light or a physical object. Can we leave the question open as to which? Does the breadth of category-stretch span across the categories of the merely apparent and real objects, i.e. of nonexistent and existent, phenomenal and real? The trick of light may look very much like the physical object, but there obviously cannot be an item which can be both a merely phenomenal object and then turn out itself to be an actual object. With this question we tread very dangerous grounds – the birthplace of many a redundant distinction as well as many a dangerous conflation.

The tables are indeed turned. Denials of existence of singly identified items no longer pose any threat. In fact, they seem trivially true because it is unsurprising that an item of one game is quite unavailable in another. But an affirmation of existence which previously used to look pointless because it was too trivial or even necessarily true now looks nonsensical because it could not possibly be true. We cannot straightforwardly interpret a Game* statement like: "That little green man (over there in semi-darkness) really exists" because all that we can mean is that *that phenomenal object* (small, green and human looking) has some physical object *corresponding* to it. What is said to exist is not what is referred to by the subject-term and we seem to go back to the carefully eschewed paraphrase account

$$(\exists x)\ (x \text{ is a physical object and that phenomenal object is grounded in } x)$$

which robs the existential statement of its intuitive singular character.

7.2 THE PROBLEM OF SINGULAR AFFIRMATIVE EXISTENTIALS

Moore has made the most strenous attempt to do justice to the commonsense tendency of believing that "That exists" can be more than just an idle assertion about a demonstrated physical object. All his results are not equally emphatically stated and some of them are quite obscure. Still, a brief excursion into these musings will be rewarding. To start with a typical remark:

I think that part at least of what we mean by "This exists" where we are using "this" in the same way as when we point and say "This is a book" (namely to convey that the sense-datum I am referring to is *of* a book) is "This sense-datum is of a physical object".[11]

Elsewhere he says more succinctly:

Where I say "This desk is real" I am saying "This impression *is of a physical object*" but the impression isn't the desk nor does "is real" mean: is of a physical object.[12]

Obviously, Moore makes a distinction between the demonstrated sense-datum (because that is, apparently, what he thinks "This" directly picks out) and the putative physical object of which the existence is asserted. And he rightly goes on to suspect that Russell would have pounced on such an explanation, reducing it to:

$$(\exists x)\ ((x \text{ is a physical object which has caused this sense-datum and } (\forall y)\ (y \text{ has caused this sense-datum} \rightarrow x = y))$$

treating "This exists" to be short for a typical Russellian existential involving a definite description:

$$E!\ (\iota x)\ (x \text{ is a physical object of which this is a sense-datum}).$$

And this would finally do the job of showing that even here the information conveyed did not consist of a single item having the property of existence. Only the sense-datum had to be existent if it could, at all, be pointed at by a truely proper-name "this". But it is not the existence of the sense-datum which was being asserted. Since "The physical object of which it is a sense-datum" is a denoting phrase, it did not have to denote anything in isolation. Hence, existence is not being predicated of anything.

But Moore, like us, is reluctant to concede this move. He prevents it by denying that "*of*" here stands for any ordinary relation.

Apart from the well-known difficulties concerning reference to individual sense-data when issuing what one expects to be a publicly understandable statement, the above analysis becomes avowedly unclear just at the point where we sought illumination from it, namely the relation between what is perceived immediately (and assumed to be real) and what is said to (or said not to) exist. It seems that if "This exists" is true, then the "this" refers to one sort of object (a three-dimensional physical object with which the sense-data, even if we admit them, are related by something very close to identity), whereas, if it is false, then "this" refers only to certain sense impressions and "exists" does not quite mean *exists* (because those impressions do exist only they do not have the ontological support that we thought they had) but means something like: *is caused by or anchored in a real object.* Recall Pears' remarks:

Suppose I see a dagger and have good reason to believe that it is only a hallucination. Then I might say "That dagger does not exist." How does this statement avoid being a referential contradiction? For, there is no doubt that it does *somehow* escape contradiction. Here, I think, we need to make a distinction between two different aspects under which the dagger might be considered to exist. First, it might exist as a visually experienced dagger, and the subject phrase "That dagger" referentially implies that it exists at least at that level. But secondly it might exist as a dagger in space, and the verb "does not exist" denies that it exists on that level. The result is that there is no incompatibility between what is implied and what is denied.[13]

This proposal sounds as if it is defending an epistemological position (which is seldom actually held) that what we immediately see is neither *of* nor *not of* a

physical object but either *is* or *is not* a physical object because that is what it simulates. We can take our "this" as primarily picking out what Anscombe calls "*the thing it latches us on to*"[14]; then we can conveniently either deny or affirm its existence without having to worry that it fails to refer unless what it refers to exists.

In order to make sense of our earlier question "Does *this* exist?", we must admit the possibility of referring to an *object* – within what we have called Game* – which overlooks the other language-games (e.g., the actualistic, the fictional, the game of appearing items or immediately perceived objects, and that of abstract entities). After securing a reference within some game or other (usually one of the imitative or parasitic language-games like that of make-believe or the description of an objectively unevaluated experience), we can then proceed to deny or affirm of that referent the first-level property of natural existence (which is constituted by occupying a more or less definite position in time and usually but not necessarily a certain place as well), which some items of the game played with fictional or phenomenal items (the guests) possess but most (natives) lack.

The reason why we find that some items identified initially as game (2) or game (3) items can be said to have the master-game attribute of existence *tout court* is not that some fictional items can *become* or match something real or that some dreamt of or hallucinated objects *earn* a place in the objective world ("dreams come true" as we popularly say). As we shall see in the next section, such things cannot, strictly speaking, happen. We can affirm their absolute existence because to start with they had been (although we may come to realise this after we have identified them as merely fictional or just phenomenal) *guests* from game (1) or game (4). In these games the items are all real (even if all of them might not exist at a particular time in the quite separate sense of existing now, when "now" refers to the time when reference to them is being made).

This leads us to the definite but not obvious conclusion that no *native* items of game (2) and game (3) are real or existent in the master-game sense of the term. A corollary from this is that the actual mental entities (if there are any, particular sense impressions or psychological events which might occur to someone during either a veridical or a hallucinatory perception) are not the items of game (3). Of course a painting can depict a sulking nymph or a wrathful God. Such sulk and wrath will be native game (3) items which are mental states. Literal materialisation of dreams may or may not happen, but that is not the sort of thing asserted by affirmative existentials like "That river (when "that river" refers to a dream item) exists." We cannot bring guests from games (2) or (3) to game (1). The immigration is always one-way. Many real objects are guests to game (3). King's College Cathedral can look just like King's College Cathedral in my dream of meeting Wittgenstein's daughter there. Wittgenstein's daughter may have the face of Virginia Woolf and have the accent of a German artist I met in Cambridge. However *she* – the daughter of Wittgenstein — will be a native to game (3), while the Cathedral will count as a guest from reality. In fact, even most of the native objects are modelled out of strange selections of parts and properties of actually encountered objects from reality. They fail to exist because, typically, for instance in dreams, they come with incompatible identification claims. As Parsons sensitively illustrates:

> I dream I am in a room; the ceiling is above me but you get to it by going down the stairs in a corner. The tiles on the floor keep passing through one another. ... A horse shows up; it is also a person, yet clearly not a person.
>
> Parsons (1980) p. 209

The room, the stairs and the horse could all be bits of guests from the world of my waking experience, but they are either impossibly combined or hopelessly curtailed. When they are not so, and when we clearly recognise someone or some place all through the dream to actually be our uncle, or our schoolmistress, or our childhood home, we can truly say that he, she or it exists, not because a game (3) item also materialises itself in game (1) but because we recognise him, or her, or it to be a game (1) item smuggled intact into game (3).

We must, however, admit some such possibility of immigration, even in face of such strong reasons in favour of some sort of counter-part theory. Otherwise no affirmative existential would receive an intuitively straightforward explanation, and negative existentials would become trivially true. Unless "Napoleon exists" (uttered in the context of *War and Peace*) means that Napoleon was a guest from game (1) to the game (2) that Tolstoy plays with us — that the French conquerer *himself* is spoken of by the tellers and re-teller of the story — "Natasha does not exist" would not at all be an interesting piece of news. Without some traffic between the games, the failure to find an item of one in another would never be surprising. We have to account for both the possible truth and the possible informativeness of affirmative as well as negative singular existentials. A master-game which allows us to plant one foot in game (2) or game (3) and another in game (1) is not enough for that purpose. The possibility of a trans-game identity of some items, in other words, of *item-immigration*, must also be provided for.

7.3 SOME ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTS OF INFORMATIVE SINGULAR EXISTENTIALS: MOORE AND KRIPKE

In discussing the alternative ways in which we can make "This exists" worth asserting, Moore considers a modal reason. Even if "this" refers to a particular sense-datum, he argues, it makes sense to assert that that sense-datum exists because it might not have existed. If I happen to see a very bright patch of yellow (whether the seeing is veridical or not), even that sense-impression of a patch of yellow which itself actually exists might not have existed if, for instance, I had kept my eyes shut at that moment. We can ignore the part of this hypothesis which belongs to philosophy of perception. Moore makes this point about contingently existing things in general (i.e. about all game (1) items).

His point of view here is, after all, broadly Russellian. That is, he takes it to be almost axiomatic that it is not possible to refer successfully to an object and say

about it that it does not exist. He also tends to sympathise with Russell's attempt to reduce all our references ultimately to references to sense-data. Thus he reaches the conclusion that when "this" refers to a sense-datum with which one is currently acquainted, "This does not exist" *could not have been true.* But from this he does not let us conclude that "This exists" (even when "this" stands for a particular sense-datum) is necessarily true or tautological. In the *Common Place Book,* in which he returns to this sentence again and again, Moore writes:

> Let us say "This thing" = "the thing that is here" ... Then "This thing is here" = "the thing that is here is here" = $(\exists x)$. x is here. $y \neq \supset_y$ y is not here. x is here, which is *redundant* but *not* tautological in the sense of containing a part that is necessary. "What is here is here" is tautological = (x). x is here $\supset$ x is here.
>
> Moore (1962) p. 158

This might be based on the insistence that no existentially quantified sentence can be necessary. But Moore later argues that "This exists" is not simply existentially quantified; according to him, it is singular. "This exists" is not necessarily true, he holds, because "This might not have existed" is true. But the latter is not to be interpreted as $\Diamond \sim E!$ (This), which is false. Rather, it is to be rendered as:

It might not have been true that this exists.

But how is this to be reconciled with the firm thesis that if "this" is a singular term, then "this exists" could never be false? Now a sentence might *fail to be true* for two distinct sorts of reasons:

(a) because the proposition it expresses is false;
(b) because there is no proposition which it expresses, hence, no true proposition either.

If "This" were vacuous, i.e. did not refer to any sense-datum (i.e. if the sense-datum it does refer to now were not to exist), then "This exists" would not express a false proposition, but the proposition that it now expresses would simply not exist (in Moore's language "subsist"). Thus, "This exists" is contingent not because the proposition it expresses is contingently true but because the proposition it expresses subsists contingently, i.e. there might not have been any such proposition at all.

We have discussed this proposal of Moore's in such detail because this is the line which Kripke followed in the 1970s in his attempt to solve the problem of negative existentials. Here is his theory in a nutshell:

In ordinary parlance the word "false" is used in a rather wide sense. It can be used to appraise some definitely conveyed information as incorrect or to state that a certain serious predication about a real subject is discordant with its actual properties. But surely "false" and "not true" can also be used to commit a piece of discourse to unseriousness or make-believe, to mean that no information was conveyed at all, or that no actual predication has been made. According to Kripke's "tentative proposal" (broached in his John Locke Lectures delivered in Oxford in 1973), it is the latter sense of "false" that we are employing when we say that it is false that Sherlock Holmes existed. In the case of negative existential statements the negation only signifies that no true proposition is expressed by what follows it. Since the verse about Bandersnatches is a nonsense poem, no proposition whatsoever – hence no true proposition — is expressed by saying either that Bandersnatches live in the arctic or that they do not. So "it is not the case that Bandersnatches exist" means simply that there is no (true) proposition that there are Bandersnatches.

However, as we have pointed out earlier, this looks like a disappointment coming after a sophisticated (and right-minded) refutation of meta-linguistic accounts of negative existentials. If no propostion is expressed by any statement making use of a term empty of actual reference to an existent natural object, then doesn't Kripke's own statement (which he intends to be taken as true), namely, "There is no such proposition as that Sherlock Holmes exists", itself become devoid of any propositional content in as much as it *uses* the vacuous name "Sherlock Holmes"?

Kripke apparently thinks that even if "Fa" fails to express any proposition when "a" is empty, one may also form an intelligible description of a proposition *using* the name "a" in a half-committed way as follows:

the proposition which says of a that it is F.

He calls this a "special quasi-intentional use" of the name "a". This, as Evans has observed, merely labels the problem instead of solving it.

> ... if the *significance* of "*a*" is contaminated by its having no referent, why is the significance of "proposition about *a*" not equally subject to doubt?[15]

To put it in an old, familiar fashion: if P did not exist, could we say that P is not true? Somehow we have to be able to say *which* proposition it is that does not exist. If we do that by quoting the sentence which was supposed to express it, our account becomes meta-linguistic. Alternatively, if we just describe the proposition by *using* the fictional name, then even our negative existential seems to lose all significance because of the vacuity of the name. Kripke's solution, thus, merges into a further variety of meta-linguistic solutions. He might be pleading for a special sense of "It is not true that" which makes it behave like a new negation sign in English: "(N)". (N) would be governed by a convention like the following:

Attached to a sentence which does not express a proposition, "(N)" yields a truth.

Now "Holmes does not exist" is to be understood as "(N) Holmes exists". Such proposals are not new. But there is the uncomfortable fact that such an operator would take even the gibberish "ZLAYXBRA exists" to truth! Moreover, if "The sentence 'Holmes exists' does not express any proposition" is rejected as an account of our denial of existence about Sherlock Holmes, because it is meta-linguistic, then we must be told how exactly "Holmes" is *used* inside "(N) (Holmes exists)". Indeed, take the sentence "Holmes is unreal" as an inside-the-fiction (false) remark. It does not express any proposition. Then "(N) Holmes is unreal" will be *true*. And that is catastrophic!

Kripke cannot agree to look upon "Holmes" as a name associated with some descriptions, so that we could say that no proposition is expressed by an utterance which tries to state that some unique object satisfies those descriptions. Thus, how he is able both to let us *use* the name as a name and yet hope to convey its unsuitability for being used in a proposition-expressing statement remains a mystery.

7.4 CAN GARETH EVANS'S "REALLY" DO THE TRICK?

To remedy this, Evans himself offered a theory which works, not on the basis of a new kind of negation sign, but with a new kind of affirmation sign, namely "Really", which does the trick of transporting us from inside the game to reality.

"Really" is a word which prefixed to a sentence produces a sentence which is such that an utterance of it is true (absolutely) iff the sentence preceded by "really" is itself such that there is a proposition expressed by it when it is uttered as a move in the relevant game of make-believe, and this proposition is true (absolutely), not merely *true*.[16]

This formulation is at best badly put and at worst inconsistent. How can an inside-the-game utterance express a proposition intended for outside-the-game truth-evaluation? How does the proposition expressed *retain* the identity across both the make-believe context and the outside context? This is precisely the objection that Dummett raises in his otherwise sympathetic discussion of Evans's account of existentials. He remarks with deliberate bluntness:

There *are* no game-propositions: expressing a proposition in the game is no more to be described as actually expressing a game proposition than eating a mango in a dream is actually eating a dream mango.[17]

Since we are only *pretending* to talk about the little green man when we are referring to him by way of describing the context of the hallucination, in walking out of the pretence we cannot hope to carry with us any proposition which we might thus, unwittingly, express and which could be assessed for literal truth. The point is an old one and has a ring of Rylishness about it: to feign to express a proposition is not to express a feigned proposition. But we have to be careful in handling the notion of pretence here. Pretending to ϕ need not necessarily imply not ϕ-ing.[18] In such special cases as Evans is considering, our ϕ-ing playfully can, surprisingly for us, actually amount to ϕ-ing literally. A pretence of hurting or flirting can be exploited as really hurting or flirting. What was taken as fiction can turn out to have been history. As Evans remarks in an illuminating footnote:

One might mistake a baby for a doll: then in stroking a baby within the scope of pretence one would be actually stroking a baby.[19]

This very point was made with the revised version of *A Winter's Tale* at the end of the last chapter.

But can a singular term, thus, succeed in picking out what its user never intended it to designate? Dummett's other major objection to Evans's account is that by making referring expressions pick out things in such an unintentional way, it violates a basic principle for fixing reference. Whatever other causal or descriptive constraints there might be on the notion of singular reference, Dummett insists (and Evans apparently agrees) that no object can be referred to by the use of an expression unless the user intends thus it to be picked out by that expression. Evans's story of the truth-condition of "Really (the little green man exists)" makes the speaker use the term "that little green man" *inside* the pretence – hence not intending to refer to any real person. And yet – because the speaker's belief that it was all an illusion happened to be false — that expression is supposed to have picked out a real green man. Dummett thinks that this is flatly inconsistent with the stricture already mentioned: that referring expressions cannot latch on to objects quite independently of the speaker's intention.[20]

But Dummett's criticism can be met. It is not obvious to me that because fictional discourse or dream description is looked upon as a language-game of make-believe, we are completely absolved of the responsibility to decide what a particular make-believe utterance is make-believedly *about*. By feigning to talk about real people, the storyteller is not *really* talking about Meinongian nonexistents. But *within the story* – and now both the teller and the audience of the story, along with the philosophers analysing the statement have included themselves as passive information receivers in the plot – the story-teller *is* referring to and indeed reporting truths about distinct items. It just so happens that *some* of these items (like the city of London or the River Thames in the Sherlock Holmes stories) are *intended* by the teller and understood by the audience (sometimes belatedly) to be *identified* with the real objects which they seem to be. About all the others- therefore, or at least about certain others- we can cast a doubt as to whether any of them is also intended to be taken as identical with a certain real object.

7.5 EARNEST REFERENCE, NONEARNEST PREDICATION: A COUPLE OF TEST CASES

Consider, once again, jokes involving real people. A joke can begin, "One morning President Bush dreamt that Mrs Thatcher had become a bird flying on top of the White House. ..." Now, just because we are not *seriously* speaking of Bush or Thatcher, we cannot – without spoiling all the fun and point of the joke – assert that these make-believe utterances do not actually speak about *them* – those very real-life people. We are definitely speaking *of* them, only not in a factual way but in a fanciful joke-cracking manner. Suppose at some point in the same jocular story we hear about one Queen Rebecca of the Middle East. The audience might be genuinely in the dark as to who she is and whether she is real or invented. "Does Queen Rebecca exist?" a listener may ask at the end of the joke. Surely, as Evans correctly reminds us, I have to be *inside* the game of make-believe in order to significantly *use* the name rather than just mention it. But that does not entirely decide the semantic fate of my use of that name because, like my use of the name "Bush", it too may turn out to have an actual reference. At the end of the joke, both "Bush exists" and "Queen Rebecca does not exist" should count as master-game statements according to my interpretation. Before coming back to a deeper analysis of the distinction between Evans's theory and mine, let me give a simple argument in favour of my theory of existentials.

Take the trivial existence claim: "W.V. Quine exists" [E1]. Let it be paraphrased by: "$(\exists x)(x$=W.V. Quine)". This is a plain game (1) statement whose negation could not be true as long as "W.V. Quine" is a proper name. Take also the plain *fictional* utterance "Santa Claus exists" [E2], whose negation is false in the

appropriate game (2) (otherwise who brings those gifts?). Now, suppose someone writes a story in which Quine meets Santa Claus, who wakes him up from his naturalist slumber and shows him some gorgeous and gregarious golden gavagais (flying rabbits). Now, imagine a child who has never heard of Quine and who identifies him as a creature of fiction like Santa Claus and the gavagais. Finally, an adult tells this child: "Quine really exists" [E3]. This will be surprisingly and non-trivially true to the child. As far as the story is concerned, Quine could have been as unreal as Santa and E3 could be false. Any theory of language-use which can make the distinction between E1 and E3 perspicuous without slipping into a meta-linguistic account of E3 ought to be preferred to any theory which cannot do so. Evans's theory cannot do this. Besides gravitating towards an indirectly meta-linguistic account, he treats E3 as nothing but E1 prefixed by "Really". Placing it in the master-game *can* keep the illocutionary content of E3 completely separate from that of E1. The adult's use and the child's grasp of the name "Quine" (in E3) is located within game (2). The adult is not intending to say boringly and redundantly about the Harvard philosopher that he exists. That at least and at most one person called W.V. Quine has written dozens of books starting with *Word and Object* is not what the child is being told by E3. Partly drawing him back to the silly story, the adult is telling him about the man in the story [21] — Quine the man who never believed in gavagais that he was all along a guest item from game (1). Unlike in E1, in E3 "Quine" is used with a game (2) sense, and unlike E2, "exists" in E3 is used with a game (1) sense. This account of informative affirmations of existence has therefore an advantage over Evans's.

7.6 SENSE WITHOUT REFERENCE?

Dummett's real worry is that given Evans's official theory that no thought at all is conveyed by an utterance if it involves the use of an apparently information-linked term lacking actual reference, we cannot actually *use* a purely fictional name in order to significantly ask an existence-question. Since we can sensibly ask the question, "Does Queen Rebecca exist?" and *understand* the question as quite *distinct* in meaning from "Does Peter Pan exist?" (i.e. we do not find the two questions equally senseless), there must be some sense that we attach to those *used* names which is quite independent and remains unchanged whether or not those names have any actual reference. If we abide by Evans's conservative characterisation of a Russellian singular term, then we face the following absurd consequence. Let us mechanically apply a Tarski-style schema-T to the problem sentence:

1. "Vulcan does not exist" is true if and only if Vulcan does not exist.
2. If "Vulcan" is a Russellian singular term, then if Vulcan does not exist then "Vulcan" is senseless.
3. If "Vulcan" is a senseless term then "Vulcan does not exist", which *uses* that term, is senseless too.
4. "Vulcan" is a Russellian singular term.

From these four premises – all of which seem to be endorsed by Evans – we get the intolerable result that if "Vulcan does not exist" is true, then it is senseless!

Transposition of this embarrassing conclusion gives us the equally unacceptable result: if "Vulcan does not exist" makes sense, then it must be false. Something must have gone wrong. I think "Vulcan" (or "Sherlock Holmes", etc.) is not a *Russellian* singular term (so premise 4 is the miscreant) although it is a singular term. Evans would presumably object to premise 1: the truth condition of a negative existential may not be simply homophonic!

But the trouble lies elsewhere. Evans set himself an incredibly (according to Dummett, impossibly) hard task by requiring that an adequate account of negative existentials must fulfil all three of the following constraints:

(a) "James Bond does not exist" must come out as an absolutely and literally *true* sentence.
(b) That existential sentence must be understood as being about James Bond (rather than about the use of this name) in the same way as "James Bond is agile and fearless" is understood as being about the secret agent.
(c) "James Bond" should *not* be taken as a name genuinely picking out a nonexistent object.

It seems easy to fulfil requirements (a) and (b) by holding a Meinongian position, as Parsons does. It is equally possible to satisfy (b) and (c) by maintaining that the negative existential is as truth-valueless as other fictional statements because it uses a *referenceless* name. Frege could have done this if he did not opt for a meta-linguistic solution. It is also possible, without obviously embracing a meta-linguistic theory, to abide by (a) and (c) by saying, as Moore and Kripke did, that "Bond does not exist" says that no true proposition is expressed by saying about Bond that he exists. But Evans rightly suspects that the only way to make this (Moore–Kripke) suggestion intelligible is to flout requirement (b), and take the negative existential as a completely outside remark about whether or not any proposition is expressed by a certain sentence involving the *use* of a fictional proper name.

I think Evans could meet all three requirements if he assessed negative existentials as moves in a language-game which is played with the specific purpose of trying to jump out of fiction into real world talk. As his revealing example shows, the existence-denier is like a man who not only goes on stage and tells the audience, "Look! No murder or theft or love duel has happened here, this is all play!" but *uses* the fictional names and descriptions from an inside-the-play point of view to assert that Suzanne and the thief over there are just actors and this pistol is a toy etc. Unfortunately, Evans cannot consistently say this because he is wedded to the view that as Russellian singular terms (or pretenders to that status) fictional names like "Suzanne", being referenceless in the actual world make any sentence using them strictly senseless. Thus it seems that Evans's own theory ultimately boils down to a meta-linguistic account because the "Really" operator enables us apparently to use the make-believe singular expression only to enquire whether its own use is linked up with any actual information involving the real world.

On Evans's behalf I could try to defend his theory in the following manner: instead of quasi-intentional use, this time we have to have the concept of quasi-

understanding, because we are told that in order to understand "Really (S)" we must quasi-understand (S). There is, of course, no parallel mystery about the notion of quasi-understanding. It is merely what we might call understanding an utterance as a move in a game of make-believe, i.e. either as a game (2) or game (3) utterance. Unlike Kripke, who does not leave room for these two separate levels of understanding,[22] Evans borrows from Walton the account of "make-believedly understanding a statement", generalising it for both existentially conservative as well as creative games.

We must make-believedly understand the remark "Aladdin's lamp exists" from a game (2) point of view as an F_2 statement in our terminology, because even when that statement is evaluated as an F_3 it remains *about* Aladdin's lamp, and not about any old lamp or any old nonentity.

"Which one is it", we might say, "that you are saying does not really exist?" And answering, or even being prepared with an answer to, this question inevitably draws one into the pretence: That little green man on the top of the wall – that is the man I am/he is saying does not exist.[23]

If the little green man, unknown to the utterer of the negative existential really does exist, then by understanding the embedded (*basic*) existential statement, the utterer would actually be thinking a genuine and true thought. He may not know this, but in such a case "Really (the little green man exists)" would be true and its negation false. This happens when, unknown to the utterer of the negative or affirmative existential sentence, the little green man is actually a guest who has migrated from game (1) to game (3). When it is not a guest but a native either of game (2) or game (3), by understanding a statement about it one would not be thinking a thought which is absolutely true (here Evans's theory retains a vestige of Kripke's—namely that one would not be thinking any thought at all – which could not be right). Hence, "Really (Aladdin's lamp exists)" would be false and its negation true.

Even after the above explanations the basic difficulty of Evans's theory remains unremedied. If no thought at all is expressed by a bit of talk which makes information-invoking *use* of a name lack a real world referent, then how can the question of assessing *that* thought outside the make-believe arise? What Evans tries to do by bringing an utterance primarily issued in a game of make-believe under the "Really" operator, I do by evaluating it as a move in Game*. Saying something about something always happens in some game or other. When we want to make existential remarks or ask existence-questions, we play a special sort of game. Negative existentials could not be placed in game (1) just by treating the negation as special or by supposing the embedded assertion to be prefixed by a "Really" operator. After all no singular reference can be secured for a purely fictional name like "Gradiva" or "Mr Pickwick" inside game (1). They must be looked upon as moves within a special trans-game talk which enable us to pick out items from a fictional or a suspect perceptual situation and then assert in the game of actual-world description whether a particular item is actually a guest from there or not.

We must also add here an essential remark about game (4) guests in game (2). Since both game (1) and game (4) items are real without any qualification, some

game (2) items may simulate game (4) items. A classic example of a *spurious* guest from game (4) in game (2) is the language "Newspeak" which Orwell tells us the people of the fictional future will speak. We might be misled by the thought that abstract objects ideally don't need existent instances in order to be themselves existent and suppose that whatever abstract object we can possibly refer to even in a fictional context actually exists. As we have noted earlier, there are all sorts of abstract objects, some of them having a temporal history, others being timeless. The character of Holmes was created by Conan Doyle, although it never was exemplified by any actual entity of whom we could say that it is *his* character. But in a fiction we might get the mention of a character created by a fictional author, e.g. that of Gonzago in *Hamlet* or of a borogove in *Through the Looking Glass*, which is fictional even inside the fiction. In this sense, therefore, even the abstract entity corresponding to them – the characters *referred to* in a fictional work – would be nonexistent outside the parent fiction. The *characters* of Alice and Humpty Dumpty are existent in game (4), hence in Game*. Alice and Humpty Dumpty are not existent in Game*, though they are there in game (2). But even the character of a borogove is not existent in game (4) in the absolute Game* sense, because borogoves do not exist even in game (2) (at least at the first level).

This is a very tangled issue, but I feel certain that there are purely fictional abstract items, nonexistent styles of painting, purely imaginary institutions and so on.

7.7 A MODAL CROSSWORLD PUZZLE

Before going any further, we must briefly note and endorse an important result derived from Kripke. Earlier we implied that it is true of any particular entity that it might not have existed. I might not have existed if my parents had never met. Given that they did in fact meet and I did get born, I can now be "carried in"[24] to be evaluated in a possible world where I may be missing for all sorts of reasons depending upon how remote such a possible world is from the actual one we inhabit. But obviously in such a possible situation (which did not happen) I would not be *unreal* in the fictional or merely phenomenal sense. Let's pretend for the moment that we are disciples of David Lewis and talk about the possible world where James Mill did not meet his wife and John Stuart Mill was not born. Mill (J.S.) is not a game (2) item there because nobody may write a story about *him* in such a world. Indeed, nobody *can* write a story about *him* in any world where he does not exist (given that he does exist in one, namely, the actual world). This may sound strange. The best that we can imagine is a possible world where someone writes a story about James Mill's (assuming James Mill exists there) precocious son who develops into a logician and a utilitarian and is even called "John Stuart". But if he is genuinely writing creative fiction, the author of this story will claim that he had invented this character. If he is made conscious of an individual in another possible world (which is what our world would be to the denizens of another possible world) who fits his description word for word, he would not gleefully remark,

"Ah! That's the one I was writing about." He would call the resemblance startling but fortuitous. The story would never be about the actual author of *Utilitarianism*.

To come back to less perverse hypotheses, if it turns out that Conan Doyle's description fits some individual in a possible world, there is no reason to regard *him* as Holmes himself – thus entertaining the notion that Holmes might have existed for two sorts of reason:

(a) There is no guarantee that there is only one individual of a possible world (other than ours) who will fit *all* his descriptions, because they are open-ended. Every description, including a name, may be satisfied by two individuals of the same possible (but non-actualised) world, one of whom, say, had a mole on his back while the other had none. We should not have any reason to choose one over the other as the possible referent of "Sherlock Holmes"; and, yet, since the name has to be the name of only one person, if it has to be the name of anyone, it cannot be the name of either.

(b) Since such massive coincidences will be accidental, Conan Doyle's own use of the name cannot be traced back causally to him. So, just as in the case of an actual-world dweller Conan Doyle would not say that *he* was Holmes, he would not say anything different about the possible-world dweller.

"Holmes" is, therefore, not a name of a possible-world dweller, and, hence, in no sense can we say that *Holmes might have existed*[25] except in the sense that it might be discovered to have been Conan Doyle's intention that we take him to be writing largely fictional stories about a real detective living in London, etc. whom he knew or knew about – i.e. that Holmes might turn out to be a guest item from reality. This could never happen without our revising our notion of the author's intention regarding the status of the fictional narrative in relation to history. Kripke remarks that we sometimes confuse epistemological questions as to what might transpire to have been the case in the actual world, and modal metaphysical questions as to what might possibly be the case. The idea that the fictional Sherlock Holmes might have existed (or the graver mistake that we talk about a non-actual but possible object when we talk about Holmes) is a result of this confusion. It is perfectly possible that we might be mistaken as to what game we are supposed to play by the use of a certain text or a traditional set of beliefs — whether it is meant to be taken as a factual document or as figments of the imagination. But as long as we presuppose that a certain item is primarily an item of fiction which is *actually not a guest from reality* (i.e. does not exist by the master-game standards), there is no possible world where it could exist so that people could assert true propositions in game (1) about it.

Given that Conan Doyle *invented* Holmes, there is no possibility that that very individual could be, beyond his knowledge, a denizen of another possible world. Of course there is the possibility that there could exist a person x who did most of these things, etc. But that is not to be confused with the possibility of Holmes existing.

To sum up, we might say that Holmes, if he does not exist, necessarily does not exist, and "Holmes", if it is a non-designator of a real item, is a rigid non-designator. Generally, things that don't exist in this world may exist in others. But

if an item is purely *fictional* in the actual world, it cannot be real in any possible world.

7.8 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

This gives us a clue to answering the first question that one can ask regarding my model of language-games: "Are the language-games analogous to possible worlds?" I have spoken of statements being true in a particular game, false in another and of things existing in one game and not existing in another – which can suggest the above query. But the answer is clear. Since Holmes exists in one game, i.e. in game (2), and he does not exist in any possible world, games are not possible worlds. I do not want to develop the present notion of language-games into any sort of *model-theoretic* structure because I do not think that our ordinary talk about the real world, about worlds projected by fictional works, films, dreams or about the world of abstract entities can be faithfully represented as following any such rigorous pattern. Model-theoretic semantics surely has its intrinsic as well as its regulative value in systematising our thoughts about truth and reference. But the games I have tried to distinguish here are neither exhaustive nor rigidly distinguishable in actual speech situations. In ordinary discourse we often, quite imperceptibly, hop from one game to another. This is usually tacitly noticed. When a speaker makes such a swift jump, and the hearer fails to observe the switch, this results in various things depending on the seriousness of the failure to detect the change. It can result in picturesque speech, in a joke, in awkward communication failure, or in a clear misunderstanding deserving a correction. The correction often consists of a move in what we have called the master-game because the misunderstanding person has to be told about the game (1) status of a certain game (2) item: told whether it was purely a game (2) item or a guest from the former. Switching from game (1) to game (4) is, naturally, without risk as both have items which, if genuinely referred to, are real. Tensed denials of existence, even if tense marks are not explicit, are not to be taken as Game* remarks.

We should also carefully distinguish between an ordinary shift from one game to another (e.g. in the statement made by a girl in real life, "My father dotes on me just as Emma's father did on Emma") and the striding-across games which constitutes Game*. Since game (2) (that is, fictive, hence fictional) talk emulates everything (including such general features like bivalence) of the real world (and that we have a Game*, i.e. the practice of making trans-game existence assertions and denials is a fact which, after all, can be stated about the real world as a game (1) truth), it will also emulate Game*. And, thus, we have negative existential statements inside game (2) like: "Gonzago does not exist" (uttered inside the plot of *Hamlet*) which we have already explained in terms of embedding one game into another.

Second, one might find fault with the game analogy because it is nothing but a picture. One might complain that it really does not solve logical puzzles but gives a convenient simile to alleviate our worries over those puzzles. I do not want to

spend much time on such objections. They would be based partly on a mistaken reading of the task I set myself. Obviously, I do not want to raise a foundation for metaphysics which makes room for all sorts of talked about nonentities and gives individual criteria for them. I wanted to have better insight into how we can intelligibly state that certain particular things do not exist in spite of making clear which things we are picking out and even being able to describe them. I have, admittedly, done this by means of an analogy. But if such hallowed philosophical doctrines like Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning and Quine's holistic view of a body of truths gradually shading off from the centre to the periphery, from necessity to contingency, can be recognised as illuminating despite being so explicitly analogical, why should I fight shy of analogies? In a lecture Wittgenstein once said that his own contribution to philosophy had consisted in inventing some new similes.[26] So I must be in good company!

How can we achieve in the master-game what none of the other language-games would allow us even to attempt, namely to *use* a singular term to pick out something that is not there to be picked out? This is a nagging worry which I must now address.

Since Russell's *On Denoting*, some philosophers of language have taken singular reference as something rather sacrosanct and rare. Clearly, I am not one of them. Reference, either singular or general, intentional (speaker-determined) or conventional (language-determined) must be interpersonally available for communication. Thus whenever an immediate interlocutor or an ancient text speaks about a specific object, and I know precisely which object is being spoken of, singular reference, I should think, has been achieved. Just as it is absurd to demand that I should be able perceptually to discriminate and point my finger at the object for my reference to it to be genuinely singular, it is also too much to require that I must have at my disposal some uniquely satisfiable description and believe that this object (and none other) satisfies it. Doxastic commitment can presuppose rather than be presupposed by successful reference.

One major purpose of my proposal to treat all sorts of talk *about* things as relative to some specific language-game or other was to relax the constraints on singular reference. Some talking is done with full belief (and indeed claimed knowledge) in the historicity of the information used to single out and describe its topics. Yet another kind of talking is done with full knowledge that the background "information" is constituted by pure (or mixed) make-believe. Once derived reference – *what another person has in mind as the thing spoken of* – is admitted within the range of singular reference, I see no rational ground to disqualify reference within the context of a fictional story as "nonsingular".

Of course singular reference remains philosophically hard to analyse and capture. The question: "What makes my thought about Bush a thought *about* Bush?" is no easier to answer than the question: "What makes a story about the Holy Grail a story *about* the Holy Grail?" I confess that I have not been able to come up with a comprehensive criterion for such "about"-ness appropriate for all the games. I have not even tried. But I have some fairly definite ideas about what sorts of account would *not* work. Here is an argument against that version of the

Russellian direct reference theory of singular terms which, we saw, got Evans into trouble. Suppose that three people, A, B, and C, read the same ancient manuscript which describes a certain King Abbanes[27] in rich detail. A thinks it is a one-off historical document recording the events in the life of a seventh century king. B thinks it is a ninth century pure romance. C cannot make up his mind about this apocryphal narrative but knows it well enough to be able to tell who Abbanes was with exactly the same accuracy as A. (I think there is an important sense in which A, B and C are all thinking about the same king, and their relationship with the same text has something to do with this intentional identity claim.) Naturally A says that Abbanes existed, B denies it and C sincerely asks, "Did Abbanes exist?" Given this scenario, my argument is simple. If, in order to express any thought about a specific single person or convey any understandable content by the use of the singular term "Abbanes", one had first to believe that the referent existed (and indeed directly took part in the *proposition* expressed), then B or C would not be expressing any thought or making any sense whatsoever by denying or doubting the existence of Abbanes while using his name. Yet obviously B and C make perfect sense. The theory which requires the actual existence of the reference as a pre-condition of a singular literal use of a singular term must therefore be mistaken.

Even if the informational basis of the term "The Holy Grail" is wholly mistaken, the term does not lose literal significance. A sentence like "Jesus drank from the Holy Grail at his last supper" can be understood by participating in the belief-world of medieval Christianity, because we can still grasp the *mode of presentation* associated with that singular term. Is the denyer or doubter of existence singularly referring to these modes of presentations only? I have shown earlier on (in Chapters 2 and 5) that treating existential statements as indirect discourse about Fregean senses and fictional names as picking out modes of presentation would not work.[28] For one thing, let us not forget that the mode of presentation linked with an empty fictional name *does exist*. If the manoeuvre of making them refer to their own senses worked, all this fuss about language-games would be unnecessary. What we grasp when we master the correct use of a singular term is a sense or a *route to reference*. But once we have grasped that, somewhat cartographically we can speak *of* the intended destinations of these routes, through these modes of presentation. Our reference to them succeeds if we mutually agree upon the sameness of the intended target even if the descriptive content latches on to the target referentially rather than attributively. "Abbanes", A might say, "might have been called by some other name and the book may have got his dates all wrong." Interestingly enough, even B, who does not believe in any such king existing beyond the narrative, also can say the same thing within game (2) because he can *pretend* that the ancient manuscript might have the *story* all wrong about Abbanes.

Now, normally when we are describing something, we have to assume that some actual reference is being picked out by our singular term; otherwise, as Frege saw clearly, there would be nothing for the thought expressed to be true or false of. That is why, within each *ordinary* (official) game existential generalisations on singular terms must be allowed.

But to play the master-game is to throw open all the referents of singular terms in all the games of make-believe to existential assessments outside their original contexts of identification. Even within the realm of fiction by playing a couple of game (2)s at the same time, we are able to state that Sherlock Holmes does not exist in the London of Oliver Twist. Somewhat similarly, in the master-game, we say, "There is Sherlock Holmes in the Holmes stories, *who* is not there in reality."

By what magic can we retain identity of reference through this bridging "*who*"? This is a question which I have to answer partly by a Moorean defence of common sense. It is clear to me that such use of a fictional singular term is made outside its home context in this special way to check whether its referent is a guest item from reality or not. All sorts of paraphrastic, meta-linguistic, Meinongian and indirect discourse accounts fail to do justice to the illocutionary structure of such existential utterances. Hence I conclude – if you like through a transcendental argument on the basis of otherwise inexplicability – that the master-game *is played*.[29]

Walton almost anticipates this account at the very end of his book when he notices that in saying "Gregor Samsa does not exist" we partly retain the pretence[30] that "Gregor Samsa" is the proper name of the man who turned into an insect. Since his account dictates that to retain a pretence in a statement is to allow the entire statement to be prefixed by "It is fictional in F that", we reach the undesirable translation, "It is fictional in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* that Gregor Samsa does not exist." This was my reason for avoiding the prefixing device. The correct paraphrase, as everyone ought to agree, is this:

The person {who is Gregor Samsa in Kafka's story} does not [exist in reality].

It is just a brute fact about human communication that in such statements the part within curly brackets is understood in one way and the part within square brackets is understood with quite another degree of doxastic commitment. The predicate (within square brackets) is not only a make-believe predicate (I do not agree with Walton's light-hearted remark, "Perhaps it is fictional that … "exists" expresses a first-level predicate"), it is a *bona fide* predicate in game (1). But the singular term is only available as a singular term in game (2). The entire statement therefore is not interpreted correctly if it is taken as belonging wholly in game (1). The nonexistence of Gregor Samsa is not an ontological gap within reality like the nonexistence of coloured sounds. Since the statement of nonexistence involves reference to a fictional item but is true only outside the fiction, it makes us refer to something without presupposing its actual existence. How we manage to do that is as much or as little a mystery as how two of us manage to have the same individual *in mind* when we both use the name "Socrates" in the same sense (without having to touch the old man's tunic from two sides, as it were).

Finally, is there any limit beyond which we should stop honouring the commonsense claim to *refer* to an item by using identifying designations? I think there is. I have not propounded a Meinongian thesis which commits us to innumerable knowledge-independent, untalked of, nonexistent objects corresponding to each constructible set of properties. I am ready to explain away definite descriptions like "Wittgenstein's book on Medical Ethics" or "The famous Taj Mahal in Paris" in a Russellian fashion if they occur in a jovial negative existential. Unless someone honestly reports a hallucination, writes a story about, paints a picture of, reports a dream about or finds a traditional body of beliefs about a certain nonexistent, I would not consider it to be a designated item in any game whatsoever. We need not invoke the master-game if we can, faithful to our intuitions, give an account in the "There is no such thing as. …" style inside one of the ordinary individual games.

There will surely be borderline cases, genuine disagreements as to whether in a certain context intention to refer in some game or other was present or just deceitfully faked or unsuccessfully attempted. Not all wishes to refer need to be recognised as fulfilled in some new language-game. *Mis-remembered* stories and incorrect identifications of items in the "world" of a painting are as possible as mistakes about real objects.[31] Without settling larger debates about the speaker's reference versus semantic reference, I simply concentrated on pointing out that we do refer to and speak of things other than real, particular and abstract objects of the world. And, indeed, without admitting the possibility of such references, we cannot understand our understanding of negative existentials in the way we actually do understand them.

Finally one might feel puzzled about the predicate "does not exist". Am I giving it any sense in game (1)? Where are the objects of which it is true? I could have simply said, in reply, that all the objects genuinely referred to in game (1) make the above predicate *false* and that is enough for it to make sense. But it is better to give a more detailed answer. I do not regard "does not exist" as a genuine predicate at all. Two points about my own view of existence as a predicate need to be underscored here. First, existence – I have learned from mediaeval Indian logicians as well as from Barry Miller (1992) – can be a first-level property without it being the case that nonexistence is a genuine property. Second, the possibility, within make-believe speech, of making earnest *reference* to actual items about which nonearnest *predications* are made opens up the converse possibility, within the reality-assessing speech of the master-game, of making pretend reference to purely fictional items about which a denial of the earnest existence-predicate can then be truly made. Let me explain the joint impact of these two points upon my account of existence-negation in the master-game.

Though it is a first-level property, existence is only bearable (but not genuinely lackable) by game (1) individuals. Just as "speakability" belongs to everything but "unspeakability" is unbearable as a property without leading to irreparable self-refutation, existence belongs to all but nonexistence has no *bona fide* bearer. Since the other mimetic games such as fictional or pictorial discourse emulate the conventions of game (1), even there all that is spoken of exists in the appropriate sense. Hence the rule of existential generalisation holds within each ordinary game. Interestingly enough, just as by adding "existent" to the introductory description of a fictional item the author cannot make it real outside the story, by explicitly adding "nonexistent" to the introductory description of a fictional item the author cannot make it unreal inside the story. Italo Calvino tries this in his masterly story, *The*

Nonexistent Knight but only manages to portray an invisible but real knight. To fall in love without existing is as impossible in a novel as it is in real life. In order to be nonexistent within a story an item has to be a native of a fiction within the fiction or of a dream within a fiction etc. It is only within the master-game that existence is both borne and lacked, in the other games it is simply borne. It is not surprising that what is not allowed in game (1) is permitted in the master-game, because the latter has wider referential liberties than the former even though its criterion of existence-ascription is partly borrowed from game (1). Thus the semantico-pragmatic diagnosis of a true singular negative existential like "Sherlock Holmes did not exist" runs as follows: the use of "S.H." as a proper name is a move in game (2), the use of "exist" is a move in game (1), and the crucial "does not" as well as the entire act of denial takes place in the master-game. The statement is true but not routinely or trivially so because "S.H." could have been like "Paddington Station", in which case the statement would have been false.

NOTES

[1] In fact, as a *fictional* character it does not exist in the game (2) of the Holmes stories, because Dr Watson is writing historically accurate reports of his friend's extraordinary exploits in that game, and no fictional story with the character of Holmes in it can possibly figure in Dr. Watson's world.
[2] Parsons (1980), p. 51.
[3] It now seems plausible to me that just as natives of game (2) can pose as guests from game (1), similarly there can be mere game (4) pretenders, i.e. fictional abstract entities which are not actually available in game (4). Imagine a story where a contemporary of Wittgenstein at Cambridge is said to have propounded a philosophical doctrine called "Teleological Atomism". The nonexistent "ism" could count as a purely fictional pseudo-abstract entity.
[4] Many of Shakespeare's characters (in plays not categorised as historical) were actually borrowed from plays, stories, popular myths and putative histories of his times, but we see no harm in treating them as *natives* to Shakespeare's work.
[5] Parsons (1980), p. 57.
[6] Ibid., p. 52.
[7] Levinson (1981).
[8] See my allusion to this distinction in Section 6.3 above. But the tissue only bears mud stains rather than pie stains. Doesn't that throw some fresh suspicions against the identity theory and in favour of the counter-part theory?
[9] Notice, shadows are as much game (1) objects as patches of black paint – we do not hallucinate them, they have objective sizes, shapes and positions. They are perceived *lacks* of light.
[10] C.f. Strawson's remark in *Freedom and Resentment*, p. 93: "'visible object exhibiting such and such a shape and colour' has a breadth of category spread, a categorial ambiguity".
[11] Moore (1966) p. 83.
[12] Moore (1966) p. 39.
[13] Strawson (1967) p. 99.
[14] Anscombe (1981) p. 28.
[15] *The Varieties of Reference*, p. 350.
[16] *The Varieties of Reference*, p. 370.
[17] Dummett (1985).
[18] Remember our discussion in Chapter 4 about Austin's spying window-cleaner who was cleaning the windows fully and diligently while pretending to do the same.
[19] Evans (1982) p. 362, footnote 33.

[20] I can't quite happily accept Dummett's admonition as he puts it here: "not only do the speakers not think they are referring to anything, but they are not even meaning to refer to anything" (Dummett, 1985, p. 249). Referring unwittingly to something actual while intending to refer to what one is seeing— whether it is real or hallucinatory – seems to be a perfectly normal case of successful reference to me.
[21] What if the child asks: "You mean the Quine who met Santa face to face?" Then we have to tell him "Yes, that Quine who, the story says, met Santa Claus but who in real life did not do any such thing."
[22] Kripke comes very close to it by recognising the "in-the-story" truth of "Holmes exists" but confuses the issue by insisting on the one hand that ordinary language is committed to an ontology of fictional entities as well as gods worshipped by the Greeks etc., and interpreting, on the other hand, the negation of an existence-denial in the peculiar ("No true proposition is expressed by...") sense discussed above.
[23] *The Varieties of Reference*, p. 369. Evans (1982)
[24] Notice Kaplan's vivid "distinction between what *exists* at a given point and what can be "carried in" to be *evaluated* at that point, though it may *exist* only elsewhere" (Kaplan 1989. p. 613).
[25] Kripke's own earlier position which he later refutes. See *Addenda to Kripke* (1980), pp. 157–58.
[26] Monk, (1990), p. 357.
[27] This example is adapted from Dummett (1985) p. 256.
[28] Terence Parsons has shown how even the sincerest attempt in this direction is bound to fail: see his "Fregean Theories of Fictional Objects" in *TOPOI*, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 81.
[29] See *Philosophical Investigations* § 654: "Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to have said 'This language-game is *played*.'"
[30] See *Mimesis as Make Believe*, pp. 423–30.
[31] Thus, if someone refers to "Hamlet's wife" his reference can be recognised as aborted, or else, in a Donnellanian fashion, as *referentially* picking up Ophelia. A charlatan's talk "about" Plato's grandson as depicted in Raphael's *The School of Athens* does not deserve any special language-game.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUDING UNSEMANTIC POSTSCRIPT

The trouble with the operator approach is that it attempts to deal semantically with a phenomenon that is patently pragmatic. *A speaker who is talking about fiction (or a producer of fiction, for that matter) is using a normal sentence differently than normal; he is not using a different sentence.* One particular remark by Devitt betrays the weakness of the operator approach: "Acceptance of the idea of an operator on a sentence should not be difficult. It seems that a semantic theory will have to allow such operators to explain, for example, irony and metaphor; perhaps also to distinguish assertions, questions, and commands". (1980, 174) This suggestion is reminiscent of the thoroughly discredited "Performative Analysis" once popular in linguistics, according to which most sentences contain a hidden performative prefix, such as "I state that ..." or "I order you to ...", to explain speech acts like statements and orders. Similarly, it might seem that we need prefixes like "In *Hamlet* ...", "According to myth ...", or "Legend has it that ..." to explain speech acts about fiction. The fundamental error in both cases is seeking to explain the variety of uses of sentences by sentence semantics rather than by a (pragmatic) theory of sentence use.

Kent Bach, *Thought and Reference*, Oxford: 1987, p. 217 (my emphasis)

Those who had expected an unravelling of the Enigma of Existence from this book must be thoroughly disappointed. My basic insight has been simply this: Existence which belongs to all that there is can still be meaningfully denied of some specific targets of linguistic reference. This is possible because on special occasions we – the speaker–hearers of language – can together switch our pragmatic (or, if you like, illocutionary) gears in between pinning down the topic of conversation and issuing a comment on it. Noticing this feature of our linguistic behaviour does not solve or dissolve the mystery of existence even for me. I am not one of those who write off all philosophical puzzlement on the nature of reality as merely a matter of being caught up in lexical or grammatical muddles. Even after the "is" of identity, the "is" of predication, the "is" of existence, the "is" of constitution and all other uses of the verb *to be* have been carefully distinguished and make-believe reference has been set apart from absolute spatio-temporal identification, I am sure a deeper metaphysical question about what it is really to exist remains. Forgetting about all my other language-games, even the informationally trite statements in game (1) like "I exist" or "You exist" or "Material bodies exist" or "The Universe exists" give rise to genuine philosophical problems. It is obvious that I did not even dream of raising those metaphysical issues in this work. Not that I have tried to shun ontological involvement altogether. Claiming such avoidance would be foolish for any serious exercise in the philosophy of language. My distinction between game (1)

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 197–209.

and game (4) is openly based on the ontological demarcation between concrete spatio-temporal particulars and abstract entities. To try to reduce game (4) to an indirect or compendious way of conducting game (1) could be nominalistic.

In any case, my analysis of singular negative existentials is not meant to be applied to metaphysical denials like "Matter does not exist" or "Time does not exist" or "Freedom does not exist" – not because I think the latter are meaningless (for all we can tell they are all too full of meanings) but because I do not think they are *singular* in the relevant colloquial sense.

This book will be equally useless for those who would have hoped for a Russellian, Fregean or Meinongian formal semantics for existence-negating singular-looking sentences. Like Strawson, I believe that ordinary language has no exact logic. Any one who tries to give a strict logic for fictional discourse and for our intricately plastic practice of first naming and then negating the existence of particular items of public fantasy, ancient belief or artistic representation will share the fate of the stupid philosopher (in Kafka's parable "The Top") who hoped to understand the spinning top by stopping it and taking the "silly piece of wood" in his hand. In so far as participation in (not referring to) two different types of discourse enables us to deny truly and consistently the reality of some successfully and communally designated individuals, such acts of denial cannot be mapped on to any exact model-theoretic structure (n-tuples of properties, token modes of presentation, contents, characters, possible worlds, guises, pure objects or whatever). The trouble with the good old idiom of Universes of Discourse was precisely this: it tended to foster the image of layers of reality and invited such dismissive banalities as the Russellian remark that if Unicorns do not exist in Zoology then they cannot exist in Logic either. But, can this simple non-technical (avowedly naive) description of several language-games bridged over by a master-game of reality assessment bear the heavy burden of the age-old problem of singular existence-negation which drove philosophers like Terence Parsons, Castañeda and Kit Fine to such widely divergent logico-semantic manoeuvrings?

To give this legitimate counter-challenge some more meat, I break it up into seven successive attacks. The main purpose of this postscript, then, is to defend my language-games account of existence-denials from these anticipated attacks.

First: how have I individuated the language-games? My game (1) seems to differ from game (2) with respect to the doxastic attitude of the players, whereas games (1) and (4), both equally earnest and committed, differ from one another only with respect to the types of items we are permitted to refer to in them. The difference between games (2) and (3), both equally games of make-believe in a wide sense, could not be spelt out either in terms of cognitive states of the players or in terms of the ontological categories of objects designated in them. This last distinction, namely that between fiction-based discourse and (visual) phenomena-based discourse – slippery as it is – appears to relate to the phenomenological moorings of the language-games: one originates with creating or interpreting verbal texts of narratives and the other with hallucinatory or representational "seeing". Already, here, three completely disparate principles of division have been used. Isn't this a miserable confusion of the criteria for classification? For someone whose entire theory

rests on a special transit from one language-game to another, such unclarity of boundaries between them could not possibly be tolerated. That is the first objection.

In answer, I should first admit *without any embarrassment whatsoever* that my principles for separation of the games do indeed criss-cross. And here let us pause to look back at Wittgenstein's own original list of language-games:

Giving orders, and obeying them –
Describing the appearance of an object ...
Constructing an object from a description (a drawing) –
Reporting an event –
Forming and testing a hypothesis ...
Making up a story and reading it –
Play-acting ...

Remark 24, *Philosophical Investigations*

Do we see any single or clear principle of individuation *there*? Reporting an event differs from giving orders with respect to the so-called *force*, the former assertoric and the latter imperative. But (as we have pointed out in Section 4.11 above) play-acting is not just another force, of the same level as asserting and commanding, in so far as within play-acting all these forces can be feigned: there can be stage-reports and stage-orders, as well as stage-questions. Making up a story differs from reporting, not with respect to this sort of force but with respect to doxastic commitment and so on. Speculating about an event lies somewhere between reporting and story-telling in this cognitive commitment scale, but it is difficult to place because it seems to have a touch of interrogative force in it.

Thus, I would remind the objector that it is not just a coincidence that in the first 70 remarks of the *Philosophical Investigations,* Wittgenstein was both developing the pivotal comparison between the practices of language and games *and* insisting upon the unbounded nature of the loosely clustered concept(s) of a game. The grounds for distinguishing between ice-hockey and field hockey are quite clearly different from those for distinguishing hockey from soccer. What sets apart pool from miniature-pool (dimensions) is not even of the same order as what sets apart pool from children's "ring-a-ring-a-roses". If such utter chaos of criteria does not render the distinctions between *games* unintelligible or practically unusable, I see no reason why I must come up with a linear scale of classification of *language-games* along a single principle of individuation.

Even without demanding such a clear-cut rationale for my taxonomy of talk, one can, however, ask: "How does a member of the speech-community know which game a certain linguistic utterance belongs to or counts as a move in?"

A set of general rules is very hard to come up with. Of course, if the volume from which one is reading is a book of history rather than a work of fiction, we understand that we should take the discourse generated by it as game (1) rather than game (2). But such clues are palpably crude and inadequate. History books can contain large chunks of reports on the myths and (false) beliefs of certain ancient times and people, which could count as pieces of *fictional* (though not fictive) discourse within game (1). They are usually recognisable because they are prefaced by such operators as "According to ancient Egyptian legend. ..." or "The Persians be-

lieved that..." But the occurrence of straight historical statements within fiction can be less easy to demarcate syntactically. Avoiding the tired example of Dickens's opening passage of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* begins with the following utterance:

Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea.

Just because it occurs in the main body of a text produced manifestly in a paperback novelesque shape, can we definitely assign it to game (2), that is as part of an invitation to the reader to imagine that ...? Can't the author be directly informing us of what he believes, seeking our assent as in normal fact-stating discourse? The occurrence of empty names is also no guarantee that the utterance deserves to be placed in game (2). When a starving child of an unemployed father writes a letter to Santa Claus imploring that he brings a job for his father this Christmas, it should be clear that he is trying to take part in game (1), because his behaviour shows that he is really expecting a reply or even compliance from what he believes to be a real, generous bringer of gifts. Just because the word "Santa Claus" fails to appear in factual discourse, we cannot take the child's unsuccessful attempt to communicate with a real person as a successful "playing at" addressing a fictional person. (Failed reference must be distinguished from feigned reference.) But if an author of juvenile fiction writes or tells a story involving such a letter, he would be playing game (2) because he doesn't personally believe (and hopefully would never intend his young audience to believe) that some merry old red-jacketed man with a white beard will come down the chimney at Christmas. One could say, glibly, that it all depends on the speaker's intention. But how does one ascertain *that*?

The negative purpose served by the games analogy is to rule out the suggestion that successful communication requires the hearer somehow to delve deep into the mind of the utterer to discover his original intentions and thereby decide the place of the utterance. The danger of this *mentalistic* theory of the utterer's meaning is that it tends to degenerate into the useless account according to which fictional names pick out private mental entities intended by the author. The distinction between a fact-stating stance and a story-fabricating stance – however difficult to spell out pragmatically – must consist in outer actions and complicated manifestations of expectation and readiness to respond in certain ways to questions and so on. It cannot lie buried in the mystery of any (in principle) unknowable mind of the speaker or author. That is why we can appreciate and distinguish fictional narratives and news items without needing to find out about the mental state of the person who conveyed them. How exactly we do that, of course, is maddeningly difficult to devise a theory for.

A statement like "The Emerald City does not exist" can be assessed in the context of several language-games. It could have been made by the aunt of Dorothy – the little girl in Kansas. Within game (2) of *The Wizard of Oz*, this hard-headed lady may have told Dorothy to forget all her delusive fantasies about Oz and its capital, the Emerald City. Strictly speaking, she would be treating Dorothy's talk of Oz as playing game (3), describing the contents of her dream. Fearing that Dorothy

might start treating it as game (1), she might try to play the master-game by picking out the Emerald City as a game (3) individual and denying its existence in game (1). All of this, of course, will have to be accommodated within game (2) because Dorothy and her aunt are only available in such a game. Alternatively, the same sentence could be uttered as a plain master-game statement made by us about the game (2) item: the fictional capital of Oz. It seems practically impossible to give uniform behavioural clues for deciding which conversational stance was being adopted on a certain occasion. Still, the conceptual framework of these distinct games *do* help us understand what is going on when we say something as paradoxical as "Sherlock Holmes, the greatest British detective of all times, did not actually exist" (having deprived ourselves of the comfortable Russellian way out in terms of no single person having actually done all those things). Even the utterance of a simple fact-stating declarative sentence (in game (1)) has been called by Michael Dummett an act which is "by far the most complicated of all the things we do".[1] Since the practice of what Frege called "expressing mock-thoughts" or mock-asserting genuine thoughts is much more complicated than that, it would be way too ambitious for me to try to give necessary and sufficient conditions for when such an utterance counts as part of explicit make-believe, or as part of reporting on the mythical beliefs of a people, or of speaking of what a picture depicts, or as partly this and partly that sort of discourse!

At this point we can anticipate a second attack. Why is there no sustained discussion in my book of the cognitive states characteristic of these several language games? I want to respond to this question in stages.

To start with, the complaint would not be wholly fair. In the very first chapter I have discussed the noetic structure of the master-game (see Section 1.6). In that connection I have tried to dispel the impression that with respect to cognitive attitude game (1) and the master-game (Game*) are indistinguishable because both are doxastically committed to everyday reality. To recall their distinction, no reference to Santa Claus can be successful and singular in plain world-talk. Hence in game (1) the question: "Who is this Santa Claus that the poor child was writing a letter to?" cannot even be literally raised let alone answered. In the master-game our predicative judgemental commitment remains equally realistic, yet the referential repertoire is richer. There we can raise and answer that question as follows: the boy was writing to Santa Claus, the jolly old bringer of gifts on Christmas Eve, but Santa Claus does not exist.

Since the master-game allows us to play a little bit of game (2) in order to *introduce* an individual as an intelligible target of common reference between the over credulous child and the error-exposing adult, there is, in this Janus-faced game, a minimum of *assumptive* commitment to there being such an individual. This commitment falls short of belief but is more than mere exhibition, consideration or representation of a content. When after toying with several possible ways of developing a story from a certain point, the author (or even a participatory audience: in some audience-participation cinemas in the United States viewers determine the course of the film) *decides* upon a particular plot, there must be something more than mere consideration of a scenario going on. It is not belief in but such an as-

sumption of the existence of the individuals which needs to accompany the master-game moves. And of course such quasi-positing of the referent is perfectly consistent with full blooded unbelief in it. In connection with my critical elucidation of the notion of "pretending that" (in Section 4.1.2 above) I have tried to throw some light on the exact nature of this propositional attitude of pretence. Further to that, I have little to add to Meinong's illuminating discussion of this attitude when he discusses "Play and Art" in Section §16 of his *On Assumptions*.[2]

One does not need much argument to see that the initiator of or respondent to fictional discourse, like the child at play with, say, a hobby-horse, is not asserting, judging, or expressing belief. What *is* he doing then?

Saying that he is merely feigning to believe, assert or judge has its own hazards (as I point out in 4.1.2). A popular view is that he is merely representing or exhibiting a content – just offering a truth-valueless thought to be entertained. Meinong presents a subtle argument against this view. From the fact that many make-believe contents are *negative* (e.g. the child invites us to make believe that he is an invisible man, or that no demon can kill him now), Meinong draws the conclusion that the child cannot be merely representing. Negative predication, Meinong must have believed, takes you outside the mere presentation of a thought to some complementary counterpart of affirming, namely *dissenting* from it. Thus Meinong writes:

> When the intellectual attitude of a child at play exhibits a negative character ... it may be asserted ... [that it] is less than judgement but it is more than representation, that is to say it is an attitude of assuming.
>
> *On Assumption* (1983) p. 84

I am not sure about the hidden premise that negation cannot be part of a merely represented content. Still in the above reasoning I find a lot of resonance of my own idea of game (2) or game (3).

Of course, while sharing the assumptive attitude game (3) differs from game (2) in so far as reference to an item in game (3) *can* be accompanied by an act of pointing (indexically) to a picture, or impersonation, or a movie-screen, whereas in playing a pure game (2) (reading unillustrated fiction) such locative indexicals would be out of place.

Beyond these tentative suggestions, I deliberately avoid discussing the psychology (or, if you like, epistemology) of make-believe, because after a point the distinction between these interestingly distinct attitudes – e.g. of pretending that, wondering if, seriously rehearsing for (recalling Meinong's example of a war-drill), putting oneself in the position of a believer (participant) in a situation, etc. – becomes extremely fuzzy. After a point these distinctions also do not matter. Successful communication can get by slurring over them. I can tolerably well understand a friend's remark "Get well soon" without trying to guess whether she is praying, showing concern or commanding me to take appropriate medical measures! Analogously, when we read in the *Odyssey* that Odysseus blinded Polyphemus the Cyclops, we understand it as a game (2) truth without needing to know whether Homer—or anybody—pretended, half-believed, or wrote it as part of a more or less embellished life history of a (believed to be) real hero.

Whatever the cognitive attitude of the player of a non-earnest, non-factual language-game may be, one thing is clear: the denier of existence does not use the fictional singular term with the intention of actually and earnestly picking out any real or imaginary object. For, in *using* the singular term he only continues the make-believe started in the relevant game (2). In make-believe, we do not reach out to any publicly accessible object even when we name a native item from game (2). How can we then claim that in the master-game, when three of us deny the existence of Polyphemus, we manage to refer to the very same Cyclops that Homer was also – perhaps make-believedly – referring to in the *Odyssey*? How is identity of reference possible without any assumption of existence? This constitutes the *third attack*.

In response, let me return to a discussion of intentional identity (which I briefly entered into towards the end of Section 6.6). As I remarked there, G.E. Moore's incisive attempt at answering the question: when are two different people thinking of the same imaginary thing? provides us with the best possible assistance in setting out the conditions of co-identification of an imaginary object in game (2) or game (3).

In his profound paper (*"Real" and "Imaginary"*) Moore (1966) first applauds Russell's theory of descriptions and then proceeds to give the gist of Russell's descriptive account of singular reference. When A and B both think about Julius Caesar, under this theory, A knows with regard to an exclusive set of properties Φ, that one and only one person satisfies it, and B knows with regard to another exclusive set of properties ψ, that one and only one person satisfies it. (One result of Russell's theory which Moore rightly calls "queer" is that neither of them can be said to know that *Julius Caesar* has Φ or ψ because at heart Russell did not believe in any singular knowledge). Now, in the case of real objects like Julius Caesar it was easy to lay down the condition of co-reference: A and B would be thinking of the same object if and only if Φ and ψ *in fact* are satisfied by one and the same entity, namely Julius Caesar.

Moore proceeds to show that this account will fail in the case of thinking about a fictional item, e.g. Apollo. The choice of the example is interesting because surely Greeks who worshipped Apollo could not have taken him to be nonexistent or fictional. Assuming that Apollo does not exist, the last condition—that the two exclusive descriptions associated by the two thinkers or speakers be *actually* satisfied by the target of reference—cannot be met by Apollo, because if Apollo does not, in fact, exist, he does not, in fact, satisfy any description (exclusive or otherwise) or bear any properties. One cannot argue that in the case of nonexistents the identity of the exclusive *description* (the set of properties) itself will ensure the identity of reference because, to quote Moore:

> If you and I never think of Julius Caesar by the same exclusive description, it is quite certain that the properties by which we think of Apollo won't be the same either.
>
> *Lectures on Philosophy* (1966) p. 30

About one thing we must not have any illusion: Moore was no Meinong. His sense of reality was as robust as his determination to stick to common sense. So he was not trying to push for the view that there must *be* something to which both A

and B refer if both of them refer to the same imaginary object. Since he took it upon himself to provide an account of the phenomenon we describe as two people thinking of the same nonexistent object, he surely was taking seriously the following claims:

C_1: If A and B think/talk about Aladdin's lamp they are thinking/talking about the same object.
C_2: If A thinks about Aladdin's lamp and B thinks about the Centaur Chiron then they are thinking about different things.
C_3: A's and B's thinking about Chiron cannot be explained in terms of Chiron's satisfaction of the exclusive descriptions that A and B respectively associate with that mythological name.

Moore's own suggested account of such intentional identity of reference is *causal*: A and B both think about the same entity E, just in case A's conception of E is causally derived from B's conception of E, or vice versa, or both of their conceptions can be causally traced back to some common source, and A's conception of E has some similarity, continuity or overlap with B's conception of E. When the ultimate origin of this conception of E is not a real entity but someone's false or feigned belief that there is something which satisfies this conception, then E is imaginary. Otherwise, even if the conceptions are wildly discrepant with the originally stipulated nature of E, as long as the original introductory reference at the source of these conceptions hooked a real entity, A and B successfully refer to a real E.

I find myself in general agreement with the above account albeit with a touch of discomfort about the individuation of a conception. There is something extremely subtle and cautious about the way Moore handles the nature of the author's or story-originator's original introduction of the specific item (which happens to be nonexistent) about which what I call "game (2)" can be played. What is particularly interesting is that his account is meant to be uniform across singular reference to existent, doubtfully existent and nonexistent items. He uses the example of the story of the Good Samaritan in the New Testament. The story starts: "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead." Against Russell he says that the audience does not need to imagine (suppose, pretend, or make believe) that *only* one man suffered all these misfortunes. That description – or for that matter any of the ones used to tell the parable – need not be exclusive. Moore thinks that we just need to conceive with regard to these properties that *someone or other* had them. Here I think I agree more with Johnson (whom Moore quotes and criticises) who perceptively distinguishes the "A certain man" of this story from "A man" in, say, "We need a man who can lift this stone." Anticipating the "Bound Variable" view of fictional names (discussed in Chapter 5), the best that Moore does by way of doing justice to the felt need to capture the singleness of this fictional reference to the Good Samaritan is to make the following mysterious remark:

You are not thinking: There was *only* one; but merely "There was some or other" and *failing to think* "There were several" (italics are Moore's, p. 33).

Nevertheless Moore agrees with the common-sense intuition that in order to understand the denial of the existence of the Good Samaritan we must first think of the very object – the very same imaginary person as the man (Currie's Fictional Author) who tells us the story must have thought about; in my terms, we must participate in game (2).

But to participate in game (2) is not to speak about it. The denier of existence has to talk about the Good Samaritan *on the basis of* the passage from St. Luke 10:30 we quoted from. But that does not mean that he has to be taken as merely referring to the words of this passage, or to the use of that name in the passage. In that case his negative existential would have been meta-linguistic. In order to clarify this, once and for all, I shall now raise a fourth objection and try to meet it.

Having inveighed so relentlessly against meta-linguistic construals of singular negative existentials, have I not slipped into a meta-linguistic account myself? What is the so-called master-game but a meta-game through which speakers refer first to other (non-serious) *language-games* and thereby secure some sort of proto-reference to the subjects of existence-denials?

Now, this is a grave charge provoked to some extent by my attempt, in the last chapter, to *paraphrase* an archetypal Game* statement as: "The person who is Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* does not exist." Like many *paraphrases*, this explication is indeed misleading and is not equivalent, either semantically or pragmatically, to its own explicandum. In order to see why the master-game does not consist in *speaking about* other language-games but in taking part in them, we have to look deeper into ordinary factual or historical parlance. When together we converse about concrete spatio-temporal particulars, we do not confine our direct references to things and events which each participant in the conversation has independent experience or a memory of. One of us can introduce an absent individual – some man, woman, city or animal that he or she had seen (or heard of) and others picking up this referential lead can make reference to that very individual, sometimes even questioning the introducing description of it. Thus, much of our identification of topics of talk, even in game (1), is inescapably "story-relative" rather than absolute first-hand identification. Notice that the use of "story" in Strawson's original phrase "story-relative" identification (*Individuals*, p. 18) does not invoke fiction. Indeed Strawson's example clearly states the opposite:

A speaker tells a story which he claims to be factual. It begins "A man and a boy were standing by a fountain," and it continues: "The man had a drink." Shall we say that the hearer knows which or what particular is being referred to by the subject-expression of the second sentence? We might say so. (ibid.)

Although Strawson goes on to call it a weak sense of identification compared to demonstrative identification by the speaker of a particular located in the world perceived or remembered by the speaker himself, it is important to realise that even in story-relative identification the hearer is not referring to another person's (the story-teller's) *use of words*. Whenever I pick up a name, say, of my great grandfather, from another person's introducing talk (say from my father's stories about him), my subsequent talk about the bearer of that name should *not* be interpreted as talk

about talk (or about the use of a name). If I were to think about my great grandfather now, I would be thinking of him and not about all the words my father spoke about him, although my reference will go, in a complicated way, through my memory of the meaning of those words. If the use and understanding of speech does not open up the possibility of passing on or handing down singular reference to unperceived particulars to other people, then language would not be worth much.

The confusion here might be due to an ambiguity in the verb "to refer" in English. It can mean: *sending someone back* to or it can mean: *speaking of something*. If I speak of an ancient philosopher and you do not understand the reference, I can refer you (in the first sense) to a historical document. When you come back equipped with the knowledge of whom I meant, you do not take me as referring (in the second sense) to that document!

When I point at a bird and tell you "That bird is a swallow", your uptake does not latch on to my private sense-data. According to a *paraphrase* that we are tempted to give, you may be said to understand whatever I am referring to by my use of the phrase "That bird". Notice that the paraphrase *mentions* my use of a phrase, rather than a bird! Would our talk about co-perceived actual particulars also, therefore, remain irredeemably meta-linguistic?

To avoid such repugnant (solipsistic) conclusions, we must distinguish between *participating in* a language-game and *speaking about* a language-game. (In uncommon cases like the language-game of philosophising the two may coincide.)

Another speaker's utterances may have initially breathed life into our story-relative references. But it is not only those *utterances* that we are confined to referring to. Playing along with a speaker, by virtue of knowing who or what he was talking about, we can also talk about *that*.

The point of labouring the obvious is that if it is possible for us to pick up *direct* reference to Jesus or Krishna through historical or even doubtfully historical documents, it should be possible to pick up such references to Mr Pickwick and Emma too, with the appropriate understanding of the texts and the language-games they introduce.

A paraphrase may remind us that the references go via the Bible, the *Mahabharata*, *The Pickwick Papers* or Jane Austen's novel. But our use of those names need not be taken as picking out those other uses of those names in the source texts. And that, I hope, shows how, in spite of my mention of Kafka's story in the paraphrase of the negative existential, a master-game statement is *not* meta-linguistic. To play the master-game is to play fictional and factual games at the same time. It is not to play the factual game and talk about the fictional one. Failure to distinguish between participation in fiction-talk and talking about fiction-talk lies also at the back of the tendency to regard the master-game as just an extension of game (1). In the master-game we do engage in fictional discourse. But, if discourse about fictional discourse could amount to engaging in fictional discourse, then every enthusiastic talker about boxing would be a boxer!

All sorts of fracturing of conventions and waiving of conversational implicatures keep cropping up within F2 or the fiction-game. If I write a novel, I am free to

speak or make my hero speak about that novel itself or about the business of fabricating a fictional plot. That would be a move within fiction which refers to a fictional work. But it will not be a master-game move.

A *fifth* and old objection may raise its nagging head at this point. What is so objectionable about this seductive meta-linguistic theory of negative existentials after all? A very detailed answer to this query has already been given in Section 2.21 above. To put it in a nutshell: the discourse-referring-to-discourse model of make-believe-related negative existentials that we have been interested in is unacceptable *ab initio* for the following reasons. The existence-denial cannot be about the linguistic type or token but has to be about the *use* made of it. Otherwise I could refute atheism simply by naming my cat "God". Now the use, in order to be singled out so that one can refer to it and expose its vacuity, must somehow get us involved into that particular practice of *pretending to name*, including the pretence of presupposing the existence of the item "named".

Just as you indicate which tune you have in mind by singing or humming a bit of it, there seems to be no way of singling out a use of an expression except somehow by exemplifying or exhibiting it.

A perfectly opaque meta-linguistic rewriting may give us the correct *truth-conditions* of the sentence "Sancho Panza did not exist." But just as knowing that something *called* "the gasket" is leaking does not constitute knowing that the gasket is leaking (an example used by Dummett against truth-condition theories of a crude kind) unless one separately knows what a gasket is, similarly having at one's disposal the meta-linguistic information that a certain noise-pattern in Crevantes' novel does not pick out any object does not amount to knowing that Sancho Panza – that sadly funny attendant of Don Quixote – was imaginary. To know who he is, it takes more than a mere reference to the name and the name of the novel and its author. We are exposing a pretence in the master-game, not from the outside like an old-fashioned aloof anthropologist, but by playing along with it a bit so that we can claim an inside grasp of the sense of the fictional name.

A sixth attack would be that I have dogmatically asserted that we can help ourselves to the referential repertoire of game (2) in the master-game, where we are obviously outside game (2), without giving any account of how this retaining of reference is possible *outside* the language-game which gives the singular expression its only significant use.

Instead of repeating Wittgenstein's warning against looking for an explanation ("How is it possible?") of an act when we obviously notice ourselves doing it – as I did in the last section, I shall try to meet this charge frontally. First, it is a mistake to think that when playing the master-game we are *outside* game (2). I have repeatedly said that the master-game bridges over the game of make-believe and the game of sincere reality description, not in the sense that in it we *speak about*, but in the sense we *take part in* both. That is why the master-game is only half-serious. It can allow us to secure reference to Gregor Samsa because it exploits the pragmatic conventions and the noetic assumptions of game (2). Still, the existence-predication

(negative or affirmative) is as earnest and full-blooded as it can be, because the crunch of assertive force comes with the predicate part, which exploits the fact-stating conventions of game (1).

Second, only those who presume that referring to an object presupposes belief in the existence of it feel uncomfortable with the suggestion that by playing this double game we can do the trick. Many philosophers have openly started questioning this presumption. Witness Kit Fine:

> Failure to give due recognition to a naive theory of nonexistents has led philosophers into error ... A good example is from the philosophy of language. Is "Hamlet" a proper name, and if so, to what does it refer? The correct answers are: Yes, it refers to Hamlet. But because of their distrust of nonexistents, many philosophers have hunted around for another reference for "Hamlet". This strikes me as mistaken. The idealist does not deny that the "Eiffel Tower" is a proper name for the Eiffel Tower, nor the materialist that the sensation-name "S" is a proper name for a sensation ...
>
> Fine (1982) p. 100

Though right minded, Fine's argument for accepting reference without ontological commitment takes a route somewhat different from my *pragmatic* thrust. While he distinguishes semantics and metaphysics, I would make the same point by distinguishing a description of how we use and understand speech from building a committed ontology. In any case, I think it can safely be argued that referring to an object, or thinking about an object, cannot presuppose or entail belief in its existence precisely because belief in a specific entity presupposes thinking about it. Since a rejector of polytheistic pagan faith is always ready to answer the question "What do you express your disbelief in when you say that Zeus does not exist?" by naming that particular Greek god, it must be possible to play the master-game.

To back up the above observations let us expose the error in the following specious argument (somewhat on the lines of Parmenides).

1. If you know something, then it must exist. (Otherwise, your awareness of it is error not knowledge.)

∴ 2. If x does not exist, then x cannot be known.

3. If you are speaking intelligibly about something, then you must know what you are talking about.

4. If x cannot be known, then x cannot *be intelligibly talked about, i.e. referred to.*

∴ 5. If x does not exist, then x cannot be intelligibly talked about or referred to.

The error of this argument consists in passing from "knowing what it is that one is talking about" to "knowing that thing which is talked about". The latter is *knowledge of* a thing, which does require its existence, whereas the former is *knowledge what* – an as yet incompletely understood variety of knowledge which lies somewhere in between knowledge *de re* and knowledge *de dicto*.[3] To know what one is talking about requires one to know the conditions something has to fulfil in order to count as that specific object – something like having an individual concept at one's command. Such *knowledge* (of) *what* one is talking about does not entail knowledge or even belief that such a thing exists, because even when telling someone else what it is that one does not believe in the existence of, one has to *know what* one is telling this about.

Finally, all that I have said above raises the suspicion that I have broken my promise – made in the Introduction – that I shall solve the puzzle without giving up any of the component intuitive claims. By arguing that the master-game statement is of the singular predicative form and yet denying that from it an existential commitment to what the singular term stands for can be extracted – haven't I withdrawn either claim (4), or claim (5) or both? This would be the seventh attack.

If "Gregor Samsa does not exist" (in the master-game) *does use* "Gregor Samsa" as a genuine referring expression and therefore licenses the conclusion: There exists someone who does not exist, *and* I do not quibble about the "exists" of quantification being unrelated to the "exists" of the predication – how can I avoid the resulting contradiction?

My answer, repeated in several places in this book, is as follows. Since the referring done in the master-game statement relates to game (2), so does the existential quantifier, and indeed in the relevant fiction not only is there someone called "Gregor Samsa", but Gregor Samsa, even if he is called something else, exists. But the existence-predicate which is denied in that statement (of this make-believe "assumed" entity, about whom we claim knowledge of who he is in game (2)), is the out and out committed existence-predicate of game (1). In this particular case because of the change of language-game in-between, expression of belief in existence has fallen, apart from the use of the existential quantifier. But that does not mean that I have given up claim (4). Within any ordinary, uniform language-game where we are *only* talking fiction or *only* reporting on reality, reference, existence and existential quantification can, and do, remain intimately linked.

The master-game *is* not a uniform game. It is a kind of double-talk that abides by two sets of rules: for picking its *topics* freely, it helps itself to the liberty of game (2) and (3). For making and interpreting its *comments*, it sticks to the serious doxastic commitment of games (1) and (4). For letting a whiff of make-believe into its *subject identificatory* part, it pays a price too! What it records are not *serious* gaps in reality. To use the language of Indian logic (explained in detail in the *Appendix*): since the absentees are not real, the absences recorded are not entirely genuine either, at least by the seniors standards of game (1)-style ontology!

NOTES

[1] Dummett (1991): *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics*, p. 21.

[2] For an excellent discussion of Meinong's view, see "Was Meinong Only Pretending?" by F.W. Kroon, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Sept. 1992.

[3] The distinction between these two types of knowledge of reference was first clearly drawn by Michael Dummett in his *Logical Basis of Metaphysics* (pp. 126–7). It would be rash to judge that this is merely Russell's "knowledge by description", which Russell himself reduces to some sort of propositional knowledge parading as knowledge of a thing. Furthermore, knowledge by description is necessarily knowledge of existence, whereas *knowledge what* is required by and compatible with knowledge of nonexistence of something.

APPENDIX
THE PROBLEM OF THE NONEXISTENT IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LOGIC AND LANGUAGE

Whatever is not what it pretends to be is unreal, declared the illustrious one ... what is it in that case that pretends?

Candrakīrtī[1]

A1: THE RABBIT-HORN IN AN ANCIENT INDIAN DEBATE

It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that Indian logic, as the study of correct inferences became systematised around the beginning of the Christian era, mainly to provide a grid for the running polemics between the orthodox Nyāya and the heterodox Buddhist philosophers concerning the existence of the self, God, external objects of perception, permanent substances, universals, etc. Whenever philosophical existence-claims were debated in classical Indian philosophy, the logical status of empty terms came up for discussion. And *the rabbit's horn*, the Eastern counterpart of the Homeric chimera, was cited always as a handy example. That existence-denials when construed as straightforward subject-predicate judgements create serious philosophical problems was evident to Uddyotakara – the sixth-century sub-commentator on the Nyāya aphorisms. He brings the problem of empty subject terms of negative existentials to bear upon the (somewhat Humean) Buddhist counter-statement "The Self does not exist" before he starts arguing for his own positive (somewhat Cartesian) doctrine of a permanent soul that is distinct from the body and the stream of experience.

In the statement "The Self does not exist" the property of existence is apparently denied of the self, or the property of nonexistence is predicated of it. But, Uddyotakara remarks,

> We cannot legitimately enquire which of a pair of [incompatible] properties belongs to a certain property-bearer as long as that entity itself remains unproven.

The requirement that the existential presupposition has first to be fulfilled in order to enquire about the truth or falsity of any other predication about a certain subject immediately leads to a paradox if we apply it to the predication of existence itself. Can we first ask for a proof of the reality of an object *before* we go on to investigate whether that object possesses or lacks the property of being real? The puzzle

A. Chakrabarti, Denying Existence, 211–245.

becomes more acute when simple unbreakable expressions like "I" are involved. It is not primarily due to any Cartesian considerations about the impossibility of doubting the doubter, but because "I" being simple cannot possibly lack reference that Uddyotakara says:

No one ever doubts the *existence* of the self but only questions this or that specific account of its *nature*.

Indeed, he goes further, and generalises that

No direct proof of nonexistence (of an object which is first genuinely referred to) is possible.[2]

The Buddhist no-soulist will beg to differ. He believes that words like "I", "That table over there", "Cowness", etc pick out unrealities, and that it can be shown that what they refer to does not exist.

This is how the imaginary dialogue proceeds in Uddyotakara's reconstruction:

N(aiyayika): No one can dispute the proposition that the self is existent.

B(uddhist): This is not correct, for some philosophers (who believe that in order to *be*, something must have come into being) hold that it does not exist because it is not born. This is how they put the inference:

The self does not exist

Because, like the rabbit-horn, it is unproduced.

N: But in the above, the words "The self does not exist" give rise to a contradiction. The expression "does not exist" is intended to be equi-referential[3] with the expression "The self", hence it does not coherently assert the nonbeing of the self. (If "The self" is vacuous how can it be equi-referential with any other expression?)

B: Why so?

N: By using the words "The self" we speak of its being, whereas by saying "does not exist" we go on to deny the same.

Notice that by using the words "speak of" in the last remark Uddyotakara seems to have committed himself to the Russellian view that referential use of the subject term makes us *state* (rather than assume) that its designatum exists in conjunction with the rest of the predication. But later on Uddyotakara uses words like "posit" in the context of ruling that whatever we say about a particular jar (e.g. "The jar is not here", "The jar will not be here", "The jar was not here before", etc) *posits* the being of the jar. Therefore, we could say that he seems to anticipate the Strawsonian presupposition theory (which becomes clearer later). Positing (*abhyupagama*) is more like assuming than asserting. To return to our summary of the exchange between *N* and *B*.

B: Obviously, we do make true assertions of nonexistence, e.g. when we look at the empty floor and say "There is no cup here"; or speaking of a cup which is now broken we say, "That cup does not exist." We see no incoherence in that!

N: A certain object which is denied in a certain place must be (assumed to be) existent in some other place. Thus, when "does not exist" is applied to the object to which "The jar" is also applied, the application of the expression "The jar" cannot tolerate the absolute absence of the jar but only lets the predicate assert that it is absent from a certain place or at a certain time. Denial of being present in a specific place is done by predicates like "... is not at home", denial of being there at a specific period of time by "... does not exist now, or in the past,[4] or in the future".

But can we therefore stop denying the existence of figments of imagination, or impossibilities like unicorns and square-circles? Or, are we only to assert modestly

that as far as we can see there is no flying horse here, now? These anticipated worries are dealt with in the following fashion by Uddyotakara:

N: The proposed comparison with (the unproblematic statement) "The rabbit-horn does not exist" would not work because the example is not appropriate.

B: Why?

N: The (compound) term "rabbit-horn" refers to a relation. Hence we are not here denying the being of a particular horn but only denying that a certain relation holds.

This passage brings us right into the heart of the typical Nyāya strategy of dealing with Plato's Beard. The strategy is, as Ockham suggested (*Summa Logicae II*, Chapters 12–14), to treat every *terminus fictus* as complex and its simple parts as standing for real elements. Analysing "Carnivorous cows do not exist" into "Cows are not carnivorous" or (which, in the Nyāya idiom of property and location would read as) "Carnivorousness is not present in cows" has a definite Russellian ring about it. Now what is true of the general term "Carnivorous cows" may not be true of the singular term "The rabbit-horn". But is "The rabbit-horn" meant as a singular term at all? There is a little problem here which is partly logical and partly translational. Since Sanskrit does not use either definite or indefinite articles, the singular number of the word endings (inflections) allows us to take Uddyotakara's (and hence all subsequent Indian philosophers') example of an empty term as either a definite or an indefinite description. There is a fine example of this ambiguity and how it is pragmatically removed by contextual cues in the most ancient philosophical grammar of Patanjali. A man who has lost his cow (a particular cow) is looking for her and asks another person, a cattle-minder perhaps, who sits on a high platform at a vantage point: "Do you see cow?" [We drop the article to give the literal equivalent of the Sanskrit.] Now, hosts of cows are grazing in front of the cattle-keeper, and yet he answers, "No" – truthfully, because here "cow" designates the particular cow intended by the speaker and not any old cow. Gautama in Nyāya Sūtra 2.2.61 gives a long list of determiners or linguistic means of pinpointing the reference of a general term to a single individual. One such uniqueness-securing device is the use of relative pronouns like: "That ... which..." In a crowd of cows in different postures, "That cow which is sitting" might serve as a definite description. Thus, even if there were no occasion to distinguish between "a so and so" and "the so and so" [and in fact, not strictly between general and singular forms of expression], these philosophers were quite conscious of the problem of unique reference. The Naiyāyika model, however, gradually became very much opposed to the occurrence of barely or baldly singular terms in our qualificative cognitions and their verbal expressions. Even proper names were understood as "applying to" the individual named in virtue of an associated property like its individual essence (something like: "Socrates" is true of whoever has *Socratesness*), just as the word "jar" applies to anything falling under the concept of a jar. The classical Nyāya model of naming is Fregean (descriptivist) rather than Millian. Of course, in this particular case the context does not permit us to take "The rabbit-horn" (the definite article is an accidental necessity of English) logically as a definite description. The singular number is better taken as indefinite and the prescribed paraphrase can ran as: "Rabbits (or *a* rabbit) do(es) not have any horn."

Even "The rabbit" can be non-singularly used for the species, as in "The cow is a domestic animal." Russell's own example, "The golden mountain", invites the embarrassingly unanswerable question, "which one?" Since Russell was not thinking or talking about any particular golden mountain mentioned in a specific story, that question is never asked. As later medieval Nyāya philosophers pointed out, the rabbit-horn is so destitute of a criterion of identity that we do not exactly know how to distinguish it from the sky-flower (another pet nonentity of the Indian logicians), let alone how to distinguish one particular rabbit-horn from another! Let us set aside, for the moment, the distinction between singular reference and general reference (or *denotation*) until the general question "Can we talk about nonexistents?" is settled.

Let us get back to the original thread of the argument about the harmless-looking denial of existence: "The rabbit-horn does not exist".

N has proposed that it be rewritten as:

"There is no relation between the rabbit and a horn." (1)

Call this "analysis (1)". Now *B* might retort that even this analysis provides us with a fresh example of an empty subject term:

"The rabbit-horn relation does not exist." (2)

N answers that he does not need to deny the *existence* of the rabbit-horn relation as such. With his very liberal notion of relations, *N* can easily think of any pair of items of the known world as related by however roundabout, complex or chain-like relation. A pair of horns can perhaps be grafted on a rabbit's head (cut off from a goat or cow), and we can then say that *that* rabbit does have a physical relation (of contact) with *those* horns, *without* withdrawing our original (general) assertion that the rabbit-horn does not exist. What analysis (1), then, will mean can be better expressed as:

"The rabbit-horn relation is not originally causal." (3)

The point of this whole exercise is to show that by no means can we find out a genuine constituent of the state of affairs captured by the existence-denial which is a nonexistent item. There are rabbits in the world. There are horns of other beasts. And there are other rabbit parts such as ears and legs which are causally related to the rabbit as living animals are to their own original limbs. In our hypothetical case of horn transplant, there is a rabbit-horn relation too. Yet there does not have to be, in the "universe of discourse", any such causally related original rabbit-horn which there is not. Where our "inflationist"[5] (the hypothetical Buddhist) went wrong is in constantly jostling together the subjects and predicates of certain relational denials, forming empty descriptions on the subject side and leaving *existence*, which Frege once called "the apotheosis of the copula" (see Chapter 2), on the other side as the denied predicate. The inflationist can still do this by rewriting analysis (3) as:

"The causal rabbit-horn relation does not exist." (4)

This would be an exact reversal of the deflationist Russellian technique of breaking up apparent subject-terms into predicates. There is a parallel between Nyāya

epistemology and Nyāya semantics here. In its theory of error, Nyāya does not admit of the possibility of inventing completely *unreal*, yet *presented contents* whose existence is subsequently to be denied. Even the content of hallucination is diagnosed as a relational *complex*, each bit of which is either correctly perceived or correctly remembered. The mistake creeps in at the level of *connecting* these real bits by means of an improper *relation*.[6] In parallel, there is the semantic principle that all names and denoting phrases in a meaningful sentence must refer to real objects and all predicates stand for properties having non-empty location ranges.[7] This principle is formulated by Uddyotakara in so many words in the present context:

When, going to deny the self, one uses the word[s] "The self" one must be able to articulate what is it that one is talking about. *We do not see a single term which is without a reference.*[8]

But in that case how could existence of any object to which reference is made in the first place be a topic of controversy? Uddyotakara, here, anticipates what has come to be known as the meta-linguistic account of existential statements. If *N* claims that the very use of the word "Self" commits everyone to the existence of the self, then how is *N*'s own positive contention "The self exists" either *interesting, or worth proving?* In answer to this challenge, *N* offers the meta-linguistic theory of existentials. What he is affirming is the non-trivial proposition: "The word 'Self' stands for some entity other than the body, the senses, etc."

Correspondingly, the Buddhist could talk about the ordinary use of the expression "The self" and predicate vacuousness of it. But Uddyotakara was subtle enough to see that this would transform even the predicate to something other than existence. So, he makes the Buddhist use a noncommittal intentional description of the subject of denial instead of a direct meta-linguistic form which merely mentions the putatively empty term.

B: What if we say that the object which you imagine to be the self does not exist?

Now, the same account of misallocation of roles to real items of the world is extended from the case of perceptual error to the case of imagination. There is no special set of intentional objects called "imaginary" objects. Imagination cannot, according to Uddyotakara, give to "airy nothing" a "local habitation and a name", but can only let us take one real thing for another. An imaginary object, on this account, is a real (but unrecognised) item endowed with certain superimposed properties which, in their turn, are elsewhere instantiated. To make believe deliberately or believe falsely that a tree-trunk at a distance is a man is to project the property of possessing hands and feet, etc. on to a real tree-trunk by virtue of its half-perceived similarity with a man standing with outstretched hands.

This only takes care of what we have called (earlier in this book) — after Evans – "existentially conservative" imagination, pretence or error. But when, for instance, the atheist asserts:

(P^1): What the believer imagines to be the creator of the world does not exist.

Is what is meant:

(P^2): There exists an x such that the believer imagines x to be the creator of the world and x does not exist?

Surely not. *N* seems to be forcing all (P^1)-type existence-denials into incoherent (P^2)-type statements. Surely there are cases of "existentially creative" imagination which would resist a (P^2)-type reformulation. If the word "rabbit-horn" stands for such an "undecomposable" creature of *pure* fancy, then *N*'s attempt to reduce it to a complex composed of several real pieces which are jointly unavailable in that particular configuration might seem to fail. As we shall see in the third section, the Nyāya philosophers showed how such objects of pure fancy could not be discussed in an intelligible public language and how our denials of existence *using* their unanalysable names would be reduced to sheer nonsense. But before we examine this more detailed development of the Nyāya view, let us cast a brief look at the rival "inflationist" view of the Grammarians which has close affinities with the Buddhist view of what words mean. While the deflationist is an atomist in his theory of meaning, the inflationist, naturally, turns out to be a holist. The so-called "simple" words and the really real elements of the world meant by them, are all supposed to be "artificial constructions" of a divisive imagination. Thus Bhartṛhari, the earliest champion of this kind of holism, remarks:

> Merely on the basis of words heard men are found to superimpose the category of an *objective thing* even on to totally unreal objects...
>
> Vākya Padīya, I/129

A2: PRIMARY REALITY AND NOMINAL BEING: BHARTRHARI'S THEORY OF LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTS

Grammarian philosophers have traditionally believed in intentional entities which are created by competent language users' genuine wish to refer by words, even when the words are known to be directly inapplicable to anything in the external world. We have chosen Bhartṛhari (*circa* 450 AD) as their representative. There have been later thinkers in this tradition who have clearly stated that the primary meaning of an individual word is not an external object but a *vikalpa*. It is not at all clear what exactly they mean by this key term which is found in the *Yogasūtra of Patañjali*, 1.9, where it is defined as "a mental construction which is devoid of a corresponding object and is conjured by cognitions arising from words". Major Buddhist philosophers like Dinnāga had borrowed this term from Bhartṛhari. The word has been variously translated as "imaginary objects", "conceptual constructs", "logical fictions" or "thought posits" with different shades of theoretical bias.

In Buddhist philosophy these thought posits are contrasted with directly presented, immediate, atomic objects of sensory acquaintance – the genuine uncoloured bits of fleeting reality. In the Vedantic interpretation of Bhartṛhari's philosophy, *vikalpas* are the stuff of which the false phenomenal world of multiplicity is built up on the true foundation of the One Absolute. It is by the *vikalpas* that we divide this undifferentiated reality, the Substance (this is the metaphysical notion of substance rather than the day-to-day practical notion)[9] to provide for the referents of our individual words. Upon this view words are artificially chopped out of the indivisible body of sentences, which alone have meaning at the operational level. They are constructs of grammatical analysis. Word meanings, too, thus belong to the domain of description and dissection of language by the grammatical categories and have no intrinsic actuality. The one ultimate reference of language as such – the Reality to which all our sentences are predicates (a notion F.H. Bradley would have welcomed) cannot itself be described in a structured language. Whenever we talk about it with words, we slice it into *vikalpas*. We look at it through the conceptual categories, as if through narrow cylindrical pipes (*V.P.* III/2/verse 8) which impose pragmatically useful boundaries on the all-pervading ultimate referent of language. It is interesting to note that the identical analogy of looking at the same object through different telescopes occurs in Frege, when he compares the senses of words with the real images cast by the moon upon lenses of different telescopes (Frege 1980, p. 61). The two contexts, of course, were quite different and Frege was no monist in his ontology.

Helārāja gives a more or less clear description of *how* words mean according to Bhartṛhari.

> When a word is uttered there arises a piece of cognition endowed with a particular form. It is that form which is the meaning of the word – not that act of cognition – which is completely subjective.[10] Whether that form is in fact backed up by an external object or not does not make any difference to its being the meaning of the word.
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> *V.P.*, Book III commentary, p. 54

Unfortunately, there is no clear distinction at this stage between meaning in this sense, and meaning in the sense of external objects or day-to-day substances which are directly denoted. There was a big controversy running down the ages and extensively alluded to in the literature on the philosophy of grammar between theorists who held that a word signifies necessarily an *individual* or a class of them and others who held that it is always a universal *common nature* or a *quality* which is designated by a word. The Naiyāyikas tried to mediate by contending, in an appeal to commonsense, that it is always certain individuals *qua* bearers of certain word-intended properties that are denoted by words. Bhartṛhari, however, strives to maintain neutrality in this debate by holding that no matter whether it is a substance or property, what is meant by a word has only a conceptual being or intentional existence to begin with.

The notion of an individual substance (in the secondary non-transcendental sense) which he uses is the widest possible one. It assigns *thinghood* to everything, provided it is named. Thus, the notion has a superficial resemblance to Frege's notion of an object. Even a universal concept (which is usually contrasted to an individual substance) becomes a grammatical "substance" or a "subject" of qualification when it is brought under further characterising concepts. Wisdom is the object about which we assert: "Wisdom is rare." "The concept 'horse'" is a singular designator of an *object*.

In this way, whatever is referred to by pronominal words "that" and "this" and which is purported to be distinguished by virtue of its being expressed by some name or other is said to be a substance in this sense. However primitive such a definition might seem, it surely gives us the most liberal and all-inclusive account of how we use the word "thing". This is the sense in which we can confer

thinghood upon even a fictional object like Santa Claus, once it has become the focus of so many distinguishing remarks and inter-subjectively available demonstrative thoughts, e.g. of children pointing at Santa in pictures or in impersonations. When these *vikalpas* have nothing at all answering to them in the external world, we call them fictional, imaginary or unreal. Given this basic notion of a thing as the meaning of a noun-like expression, let us see how Bhartṛhari tackles existence-assertions and existence-denials.

In *V.P.* 3/3 he discusses the distinction between *existence* in the sense of primary external reality (*bāhyāsattā*) and *being*, in the sense of secondary minimal reality (*aupacārikīsattā*) to which all posited designata of all name-like expressions are entitled. The criterion of external reality, however, is never made very clear. It must be distinct from the noumenal reality (*pāramārthikīsattā)* which attaches to the Transcendental Substance, because external reality is earned by particular entities by coming into existence and lost by going out of it. That is why the commentator sometimes interprets it as *existing in the present time*. There is some indication in the text of defining it in terms of self-identity, e.g. when the birth of an item is defined as "gaining itself"; but I am not sure that Bhartrhari would agree to render "That snake is not externally real" as "That snake is not self-identical".

His theory of verbal communication (as explained by Helārāja) – however psychologistic it may sound – throws some light on the secondary sense of existence. This is the kind of being appropriate to the *vikalpas*:

In the beginning, the word and the meant entity stay undistinguished in the understanding of the speaker. We should not think that the intended meaning, i.e. the thought to be conveyed, is devoid of the structure or division, which is later displayed in the sentence, of the words, because it is intuited in the form of an *inner talk*. ... Hence the sound which is uttered properly through the instrumentality of the [vocal and other facial] places and organs of speech [unlike inarticulate cooings or whistlings] is already structured by proper pause and repeatable patterns after the essential form of the meant entities. When heard by the hearers, it sparks off in them the same *essential form* and, thus, makes the meaning known.

Linguistic communication consists in the mutual transmission of the intended purports of the speaker and the hearer. Meaning – the mental entity – leaves its original form in which it is buried in the intellect of the speaker and it is the word which carries it over and offers it [as its own form] to the hearer. And the hearer understands, according to his own subjective disposition, the content which is carved by the word-concepts.

V.P., Book III/3/p. 265 (Commentary)

Major points in the above account are shrouded by metaphors. One thing, however, is certain: this is not a code-conception of language, according to which words are just transmitters of meanings. Word and meaning, language and thought are conceived of as so essential to each other that often, in Bhartṛhari's idiom, they become indistinguishable. Thought is literally described as having "a body etched with words". It is perhaps a mystical excess to think of words and meanings as *identical* in the literal sense, but for all practical purposes this amounts to emphasising the fact that words do not merely transmit meanings; they are their essential *vehicles* and without them meanings have no independent existence (see Dummett, 1978, p. 7).

That the same content is grasped by both the hearer and the speaker is ensured by the same set of relatively objective but not necessarily externally real *vikalpas* which are uniquely picked out by the particular words used. The kind of objectivity or existence which thought-posits enjoy is called minimal or metaphorical sense of existence, as contrasted with actual external existence. This notion of secondary existence reminds us of various Western philosophical parallels such as Mackie's notion of minimal existence (Mackie, 1976), Prior's wider notion of existence (the sense in which 'there is an *a*' is true iff any statement of the form ϕa is meaningful (Prior, 1976, p. 116); or what Prior calls "Bertrand Drunk's" sense of *being* which

belongs to every conceivable term, to every possible object of thought – in short to everything that can possibly occur in any proposition, true or false, and to all such propositions themselves. Being belongs to whatever can be counted ... Numbers, the Homeric gods, relations, chimeras, and four dimensional spaces all have being ... To mention anything is to show that it is.

Russell (1903), p. 449

The need for such a projected, superimposed and extended variety of being has always been felt by philosophers who wish to take our singular denials of existence at their face value. Hence, Russell's remark:

this distinction is essential if we are ever to deny the existence of anything.

Ibid., p. 449

And that is precisely the use into which Bhartṛhari puts it:

The usefulness of having a place for this realm of minimal existence it that we can put the object of negation or denial in that realm.

V.P., Commentary, III/SS-42

With this distinction in mind, Helārāja explains our denials of external existence in the following fashion. The secondary existence which we have just elucidated is explicitly stated to be "common to reality and unreality" (*bhāvābhāvasādhārana*) which unmistakably reminds us of Meinong's characterisation of *Aussersein* as "beyond being and non-being". What is denied is first posited as a minimally existent intentional object. This suspended objectivity is required to account for the reference of our *used* names in the context of existence-questions and wonderments regarding identity. In "Does *a* exist?" or "Is *a* the same as *b*?", "*a*" and "*b*" cannot directly refer to an externally existent object without making it impossible for the question to be asked. They must refer to a *vikalpa*, or to a couple of them, about which we can significantly ask, "Is it also backed-up by external existence?" or "Are this *vikalpa* and that *vikalpa* backed up by the same external entity?" An externally or primarily real object enters into our discourse and thought initially only as an object of understanding, i.e. as a *vikalpa* (something we can have in mind while using a word or phrase). That it also exists, that is to say enjoys primary full-blooded reality, therefore can come to us as news encoded in a present-tense form of the verb "exists" used with its full weight. By affirming about the *vikalpa* that it also is present in the world outside, we deny the possibility that it is merely an imaginary object. In a sense, therefore, affirmation of primary existence amounts to a denial of merely subjective imagination-dependent being.[11]

In a recent critical appraisal of the neo-Meinongian, Routley, David Lewis[12] coined a new pair of terms, namely, "Allism" and "Noneism". On top of the

uncontroversial entities like actual, present, spatio-temporal items (roughly my game(1) objects), to admit the existence of *all* those controversial entities such as past, future, merely possible, abstract, incomplete and impossible objects is to be an *Allist*. To think that none of them exist is to be a *Noneist*. Now, is Bhartṛhari an allist or a noneist? In his expansive theory of nominal being assigned to all *vikalpas* he seems to be an *allist*. But in his more revisionary and metaphysically stringent monistic theory of full-blooded reality he seems very much like a *noneist*, even a stricter noneist than the ordinary realist about physical objects. But we are not concerned with Bhartṛhari's pan-linguistic metaphysics here. The above excursion into his thought has only taught us this: if we want to assign intentional objects to empty subject-terms of negative existentials, then we cannot avoid positing such intentional objects corresponding to each and every noun-like expression and ending up with a two-level account of existence. But, like (sober) Russell and Quine in recent Western philosophy, the Naiyāyikas in classical Indian philosophy were not ready to pay that price. They wanted to have a single notion of existence and wished our simple referring expressions to pick out objects which exist in that single unambiguous sense. The next section takes us back to the story of how they could reconcile such extensionalist hard-headedness with the need to make sense of our philosophical as well as day-to-day denials of existence of certain things.

A3: FURTHER VICISSITUDES IN THE LIFE OF THE HORNED RABBIT: UDAYANA VERSUS THE BUDDHISTS

Once again, the context was the philosophical negative-existential upheld by the Buddhist — "The so-called permanent object does not exist" — which is one way of stating the doctrine that everything which exists is impermanent.

To exist is, for the Buddhists, to be causally capable. Since they elaborately argue *against* the dispositional notion of potential capacity, for them a thing exists as long as it actually produces something. Actual production is taken strictly as an instantaneous act, finally boiling down to "replacement by a next bit of reality". The causal predecessor gives birth to its own reality-confering offspring by dying as fast as possible. Hence, the hallowed doctrine of momentariness. The resemblance of the Buddhists' "activity-criterion of existence" with Frege's notion of *Wirklichkeit* is only apparent. Something unchangeable would not be called *Wirklich*; but Frege would not require that the actual be so changeful as not to endure long enough to be the substrate of a change. But the Buddhists have to make strong statements like: "The non-momentary is nonexistent" and, thus, get involved in the problem of referring to the non-momentary for denying existence and productivity of it.[13]

For Frege, the notion of actuality as a property of *some* individuals did not create any parallel problem because he had the wider (and higher-level) concept of being there or being given. So he could easily say, without any fear of inconsistency, "There *is* an x such that x does not act upon anything and is hence not actually real." But to the Buddhists no such wider and presupposed notion of being was *prima facie* available; therefore, they would be hard put to point at a non-

productive, hence, non-real object. It is in this setting that Udayana picks his logical quarrel with a Buddhists' negative existential such as "The causally barren entity does not exist".

To explain this, a little background information is required. The typically Indian logical model of inference runs like this:

[The conclusion to be proved is displayed first] **A has ϕ.**

[Then the *ground* or *mark* is given] **Because of ψ, i.e. because A has ψ.** [Then the universal premise, exemplified in an empirically verifiable case is supplied]

Whatever has ψ has ϕ e.g. B.

Here, A is the *subject* of inference, ϕ the *inferable* and ψ the *mark*. The rule "whatever has ψ has ϕ" is called "*pervasion*" and B is its *example*.

Pervasion has to be established inductively on the basis of examples. We have to back up the generalised statement of "pervasion relation" between the mark (*hetu*) and the inferable (*sādhya*) by positive and negative instances. A statement of pervasion is positively corroborated by an instance where both the mark and the inferable co-occur, and is strengthened by the absence of the mark in every place where the inferable is surely known to be absent. This latter sort of case, i.e. cases of certain absence of the inferable are called "disagreeing examples" (*vipakṣa*) and showing the non-occurrence of the mark in a disagreeing example is considered to be of great importance for the establishment of the *mark* as a conclusive one. Thus, for example unless one is sure that any arbitrary instance of a non-communist would be a non-Marxist, one cannot take being a Marxist as a good reason or "sure mark" for inferring that someone is a communist. In other words, we must find the truth of a universal instantiation of the contra-positive of the generalisation, as well as instantiation of the generalisation itself. But in some inferences which concern *everything* (i.e. everything becomes the *pakṣa* or subject of the conclusion of the inference), and purport to prove the presence of a universal inferable property from an equally universal reason or mark, it is best to keep silent about whether the mark is present or absent in the disagreeing examples because such examples, i.e. cases where the inferable property is known to be absent, would be non-existent. The Buddhists flout this warning when they claim to have supported the generalisation "Whatever exists is productive" by showing the absence of the mark-productivity in the disagreeing example of a nonexistent object, e.g. a barren woman's son. Quite predictably, Udayana clinches the argument at this point.

Among the enumerated defects of inference, Indian logic counts the *fallacy of fictitious subject*, which is classically illustrated by:

The sky-rose is fragrant,
because it is a rose, like the rose in the garden.

Since, according to the Buddhist himself, the "non-momentary" is a vacuous term, "... lacks activity" is an empty predicate and "the rabbit-horn" an avowed nonentity, all the three essential elements of inference – the subject, the mark and the example — are "unestablished" in the alleged inference:

The non-momentary is nonexistent,
because of its lack of activity, like the rabbit-horn.

Udayana remarks:

There cannot be any means of knowledge to establish a non-entity. If it could be established by some means of knowledge it would cease to be a non-entity.

Ātma Tattva Viveka, p. 59

In reply the Buddhists echo the classical retort of the Sophist:

The sentence by which you negate the possibility of the nonexistent being a bearer of properties *itself* ascribes the property of "lack of all properties" to the nonexistent.

Kṣaṇabhangasiddhi Vyatirekātmikā

This reply of Ratnakīrtī is again based on Jñānaśri's remark, typically in the form of a destructive dilemma:

Can there be any provable (epistemically justifiable) affirmative or negative attribution to a non-entity? If, in some cases, such predication is admitted as valid, how do you account for *only* those cases being free of logical defect? If no such predication is allowed then (by asserting "selfrefutingly" that non-entities are nondiscussable) you nullify your own contention.

In the face of this charge Udayana seems to concede, at least provisionally, that in making the prohibitive statement about non-entities, he *was* incurring a kind of self-refutation. Later on, in the same treatise, we come across a highly perceptive general account of the types of inconsistency, self-refutation and awkwardness which can be manifested in a sentence. There, he makes fairly fine distinctions between three sorts of self-refutation:

(a) Defeating one's own *statement*, e.g. "My mother is childless."
(b) Defeating one's own *act*, e.g. "I am mute" when uttered.
(c) Defeating one's own *cognition*, e.g. "I do not *cognise* this", when "this" stands for something that one is immediately aware of.

Here, though the self-refutation concerned is said to be of type (a), the classification seems rather loose.

Self-referential paradoxes were well known to ancient Indian logicians. Bhartṛhari discusses a series of such paradoxes, e.g. "All that I speak is false" or "No contentions can prove anything" or "This object can not be spoken of." Like the standard way out, Bhartrhari's general solution, too, is that when we are making such a prohibition we suppose our own assertion to be of a different level and the negation "to be applicable only to statements other than *this* one".

But, Udayana, instead of resorting to any such self-exempting reply, courts the more challenging position that there is indeed such a self-refutation involved in his own statement that the nonexistent rabbit-horn is not the subject of any intelligible discourse. We can react in three alternative ways to such an impasse.

(1) We might think that the fact that the denial of discussability of the nonexistent results in contradiction constitutes an indirect proof of the admissibility of the nonexistent as a topic of discussion.
(2) We might abandon all hope of discovering the logic of our discourse about non-entities and desist from giving any decision on the matter. This is what Parmenides did by his strict admonition to keep our thoughts far off from such enquiry regarding nonexistents.

(3) We might reject both affirmative and negative predication which claim to be irreducibly *about* an unestablished unreal entity because both sorts of statements would be equally unfounded.

Udayana embraces (3). But doesn't (3) force him into to total silence over this subject rather than his prohibitive diatribe against it? asks the opponent. Yes, it does. Faced with the question: "Is the rabbit-horn sharp?" one might either keep mum or speak a lot of nonsense resorting to circuitous ways of answering "yes" or "no". And who between the two would be the wiser? Udayana, a master of style, leaves this question for the reader.

He then enters into the heart of this terrible tangle, where silence is prescribed as the panacea, but only through an enormous amount of admittedly self-baffling talk.

Reflecting on the following proposition: The nonexistent cannot be made the subject of any predication ... (N_1), the Buddhists think that at least such negative assertions as N_1 can be made regarding the *nonexistent*. Hence, the Buddhists' counter-claim: The nonexistent is a possible subject of negative predication ... (N_2). Udayana could have easily broken through the logical knot by protesting that N_1 is not a statement about *the nonexistent* but is only about *statements* which do not have any existent entity as their subject, and that N_1 says about such statements that they are neither true nor false, and do not deserve logical appraisal. Instead, he bites the bullet. He admits that N_1 ascribes unspeakability (*avācyatva*) to the nonexistent, pretending that "The nonexistent" is a term standing for nonexistents in general. He is only at pains to point out that even if N_1 displays its own futility that does not provide any justification for accepting the original Buddhist claim namely, The nonexistent is unproductive ... (N_3) as either true or false. The self-baffling nature of N_1 does not allay the worry that once we admit even the so called "impredicative" assertions as correctly *about* what is not there, we shall lose all logical protection against "wandering thoughts" and arbitrary intuitions, because there is no objective method of verifying those assertions since their topics remain admittedly inaccessible to all trustworthy means of cognition.

Here the Buddhists appeal to such ordinary-language statements as "The sky-lotus is not real", "The childless woman's son is an impossibility". Belief in their truth seems to be deeply rooted in our linguistic practice.

Notice that in the course of the entire debate, the Buddhist is never represented as appealing to such affirmative predications such as "The golden mountain is a mountain". Rather unlike the vulgar Meinongian, he would refuse to allow the following "analytic-looking" sentence to be true in any sense: "The causally potent sky-lotus is causally potent".

All these properties – most probably all positive properties – which are exemplified in real entities are held to be exclusive attributes of existent objects (*vastu dharma*), whereas negations of them were generally taken in their widest sense. Thus, "non-red" to them would not stand for the property of being of some other colour (as it would, perhaps, to Udayana) but would denote a concept under which anything falls provided it is not true to say of it that it is red. Ratnakīrti would have fully agreed with Routley in holding that "nonentities have definite properties"; and also would admit that it is true of Unicorns that "Unicorns are not

the sorts of items that are prime" but would *not* say, as he would, that they *have* horns or that they *are* animals. In this respect, the Buddhists are much more hard-headed than Meinongians. Their insistence that it must be granted as true that the rabbit-horn is not sharp is based upon the same reasons that prompted Russell to allow that there is a sense in which "The present King of France is not bald" is true. Taking negation in the sense of *exclusion-negation* rather than *choice-negation*, the Buddhists would assign truth to any sentence which *denies* a certain property of a nonexistent object. Both the Buddhists and Udayana would agree that a sentence like "Wittgenstein's wife was tall" would be unserious and truth-valueless. But while its negation would be taken to be just as inane by Udayana, the Buddhists would take "Wittgenstein's wife was not tall" (W) *not* to mean that she was short or of medium height but to mean the same as "It is not true that Wittgenstein's wife was tall" (W′) and call it *true* in that sense. That would have been all right, as Matilal wants to show, by the three-valued truth table for exclusion-negation and his additional speech-act operator "It is true that" which yields *falsehood* if the embedded sentence is either false or indeterminate or senseless. But the Buddhists make another move at the same time. They jump from the truth of W, forgetting, as it were, the *secondary* occurrence of the empty definite description "Wittgenstein's wife" in W′, to the ontological observation that the nonexistent object fitting that description really possesses the property of not being tall. But this property of non-tallness is never identical with that of being short or of normal height. Ratnakīrti remarks:

Three sorts of properties are found. Some sit always on real objects, e.g. the colour blue. Some, as a rule, go with unreal objects, e.g. total lack of specifiability. Some again are found in real and unreal worlds, e.g. mere non-apprehension [both an existent and a nonexistent black cat may remain *unseen* in a dark room].

(McDermott, p. 19)

It is agreed that some negative properties, in fact most of them, belong both to real and unreal objects, but there are some like *lack of activity, lack of momentariness* and *lack of positive description* which are true only of nonexistents. To quote Ratnakīrti again:

We may say in this context that just as we find usage of words in the manner of property and property-possessor about real entities, e.g. cowness in a cow, whiteness in a cloth, running in a horse, the same property-propertied mode of speaking is also found about unreal objects, e.g. lack of sharpness in a rabbit -horn, absence of speakerhood in a childless woman's son, the scentlessness of a sky-lotus, etc.

The general Buddhist position is, therefore, very un-Meinongian in so far as it does not deduce the predicate-worthiness of nonentities from the principle: *The x such that* ϕx *is* ϕ. A Buddhist, I presume, would rather hold that the golden mountain is *not* golden, because as a nonentity it can be the subject only of such a *denial*.

There is an old grammatical distinction used in Indian logic between external and internal negation which the Buddhists seem to rely on. It was initially formulated (somewhat like the distinction so often appealed to by Meinong and his followers, between sentence-negation and predicate-negation) as the contrast between "not" governing the main verb and "not" governing the adjective or common noun. Consider:

A does not speak... (S)
A is a non-speaker... (S').

The grammarians thought that in all S-type negations the force of the assertion is merely that of disavowal, with no commitment to any corresponding affirmation of the complementary predicate. In S' implicit ascription of the complement predicate to A dominates. The first is called, literally, "repelled suggestion" and the second, "positing of the contradictory". Udayana takes negation in the second committal way and construes "A is a non-speaker" as "A does something other than speaking" (or "A is engaged in non-speaking") (*A.T.V.*, p. 68).

Udayana objects to a joint adoption of both the expedients (a), of taking the negation as an external, noncommittal sentence-negation and (b), of taking such a negative sentence as evidence that we do talk about and apply predicates to non-entities. To translate the bit of dialogue which follows:

If you insist that a non-entity can be the subject of a denial, we would ask: Why can't it be the subject of an affirmation too? The absence of valid means of knowledge remains the same in both the cases.
Opponent: That the son of a childless woman does not speak can be established by the mark that he is not conscious [note the unserious, polemical use of mark-to-inferable pattern of argument even concerning an acknowledged non-subject] but there is no way of proving that the son of a childless woman does speak [thus we prefer the negative form of statement].
Proponent: No. Even to prove that the son of a childless woman *does* speak you can assign the reason that he is a son. You cannot say that a childless woman's son is not a son, because if you do so, you will contradict yourself.

A.T.V., p. 65

This last point brings us to the most interesting use that Udayana – surprisingly – makes of the Meinongian characterisation principle. He surely does not hold the position himself that the son of a childless mother really belongs to the class of sons. (Did even Meinong seriously believe so?)

Although the dispute here has a tendency to lose itself in sophistry,[15] certain interesting and profound differences of the basic *Nyāya* and Buddhist semantic outlook have come to the surface in the dialogue. Udayana, too, would have no doubt assented to the *de dicto* claim that it is not the case that speakerhood belongs to the childless woman's son. But the moment it is taken *de re* by the Buddhists as a claim of presence of speechlessness *in* an object of disingenuous reference, he would ask the following very pertinent question:

Do you say this, honestly, because you have regularly *apprehended* a non-entity as devoid of speakerhood, or because you have simply *failed* to apprehend speakerhood anywhere outside real objects?

A.T.V., p. 67

It is only with a mock sympathy with common usage of empty terms in language that the Buddhists say that, after all, we do talk intelligibly "about" non-entities. They first use the Russellian device of negation-governed utterances "about" non-things like tortoise wool, but then use the phoney topic of unreal objects to construct a superficial Meinongian ontology of given fictions (*vikalpas*). The tendency

is to blur the distinction between empirically real, stable objects like hills and houses, pots and people on the one hand, and figments of the imagination on the other.[16] Hence, the identification of property-bearers with property-repellers, which suits them quite well, since, in their polemic against the reality of universals, they construe all subsumption under F as exclusion from non-F. Their ontology is, in a way, like that of Meinong seen in a photographic negative. While Meinong objectifies nonexistents as independent of our awareness, the Buddhists relegate the conventionally objective substances into mere linguistic and cognitional fictions. The incoherence in the Buddhists' position that Udayana labours to pinpoint becomes clear when you notice how it tries to lend support to a proto-Meinongian ontology by justifying negative assertions with vacuous subject-terms with a Russellian trick over the scope of negation. If we are doing game (1) ontology, then we begin to agree with the Nyāya analyst that a spurious object like the rabbit-horn is not fit to hold even a real *absence*. If it is said to be non-sharp simply because it is not there to be sharp, that is surely not *its being* non-sharp. As we have seen earlier, the *Nyāya* takes absences so seriously that without definite checkable information about its absentee it would never accept a particular absence.

In course of the debate Udayana draws his opponent into a circular reasoning. When the negative attribution of speechlessness is construed by Udayana as a positive ascription of agency to something other than speech, the Buddhist protests that this cannot be done because the non-entity is devoid of all agency. How does he establish that the non-entity cannot act? From the simple premise that it is not existent. But what is the reason for its failing to exist? Certainly, it is the fact that it cannot act.

Such a circularity, of course, might not be too frightening to the Buddhists because they expressly take the statement "A non-entity is inactive" as analytic and definitional. But then, what Udayana decries is the pretension of *proving*, as if through inductive argument based on instances, that whatever does not exist is *found* to be causally fallow.

Udayana then issues his warning:

> The limits of valid cognition are the limits of [logically appraisable] linguistic behaviour, beyond which there is no rule [as to truth conditions].
>
> *A.T.V.*, p. 69

The risk of rulelessness (*aniyama*) or some sort of logico-semantic anarchy looms as the main resistance that Udayana feels against non-entities entering the domain of linguistic or cognitive reference. We do not genuinely understand a statement which claims to be about a non-entity because we have no definite grounds for saying when such a statement would be true and when false. Empty predicates are inadmissible because their application is not directly learnable (except in terms of other non-empty predicates into which they can be broken down) and also because there is no objective way to distinguish the ranges of two such different predicates as "... is a Bandersnatch" and "...is a hobgoblin" without reducing them to their separately instantiated constituents.

In a strikingly Strawsonian tone Udayana remarks:

> About an ever-unapprehended [fabricated] Devadatta, the question "Is he fair or dark?" cannot be raised except in a spirit of wantonness. And if, without caring to understand what this is all about, someone answers "Fair" why shouldn't another give the answer "Dark"?
>
> *A.T.V.*, p. 69

Since the double defects of (a) absence of evidence and (b) inconsistency (in so far as the alleged answer about his complexion implicates an already disowned knowledge of the existence of the person) equally infect both the contrary answers, neither of them can be preferred to the other.

Udayana now anticipates another epistemological defence of the Buddhist position in favour of non-actual intentional objects. It is not correct to maintain that we talk only about what we have knowledge of. Don't we talk about the content of our illusions — *the* horrifying monster I hallucinated the other night or *the* tortoise hair that a child seemed to see from a distance (mistaking the grooves on the shell for hair)? When cognitions of such figments arise, they come to us with a clear differentiation of their objects. We do distinguish between the illusory horned-rabbit and, say, the illusory shadow-ghost. Sometimes we can even re-identify them within the short duration of an illusory experience. During the spell of a dream we make repeated back-references to the same person, the same room – and guard ourselves carefully from confusing one item with the other while relating our recent dreams to someone else. In all these contexts we keep consciously talking about things not known to be existing or happening but perceived falsely, and people do understand our talk as about such things with full knowledge of their non-existence. Why should we not assign the status of nameable individuals to these unreal objects?

Udayana rejects the above considerations using the following argument. Let us suppose that we sometimes do have some sort of apprehension referring to a rabbit's horn. What should be the precise analysis of such a cognition? Shall we take it as a case of "otherwise-apprehension" or a case of "unreal-apprehension?"[17]

The former alternative is not palatable to the pan-fictionalist Buddhist in search of an example of a single non-real object of the mind. For such a construal, there must be something (real and elsewhere perceived) which is superimposed, and also that something, on which it is superimposed. The place or locus of superimposition must be *there* (accessible to demonstrative reference, e.g. of the subject expression of the false proposition: "That is a horn") and what is superimposed must also exist somewhere else. If you accept all of these constraints, then "you are won over the *Naiyāyikas*". (*A.T.V.*, p. 70).

Obviously then, the Buddhists have to resort to the "*proto-mādhyamika*"[18] theory of error, according to which an unreal object itself appears as real in error. Here Udayana argues rather cursorily against a somewhat weakly represented position that the cognition of rabbit-horn is best described as awareness of a nonexistent individual with the false belief that it is existent. What sort of cognition would it be – he asks – perceptual, inferential or due to understanding of uttered words?

It cannot be perceptual because the sense organs generate perception only when stimulated by some external objects. In perceptual awareness, the mind is merely

receptive; it is the object which dominates. A completely imaginary object cannot lie out there to activate our sensory faculties. If a rabbit-horn could come into contact with my senses, it would no longer remain an unreal object. When, let us imagine, a child "sees" the horns of a rabbit, what actually stimulates his visual sense may be the straightened, upturned long ears of the rabbit which may arouse memory traces of an earlier perception of horns in other animals. The mark of the past lapses from the object of memory, and the remembered property of hornness gets imputed upon the immediately perceived objects. The objects (the ears) are there, but they are *seen* as horns. This *seeing as* can be easily and, in fact, better, explained without positing a direct intentional object like the *seen but nonexistent rabbit-horn* (Udayana would find my game (3) strictly otiose).

Even fallacious reasoning and word-generated cognition (i.e. believing intake of information) from false sentences can give rise only to "otherwise-apprehension" (i.e. cognitive misplacement of objective elements), in so far as such cognitions, unlike pre-predicative sensory awareness, come always with a ready judgemental structure. When someone falsely believes rabbit horns to be real, even then we need not account for such beliefs in terms of simple nonexistent objects of belief. If we say that we do sometimes happen to misunderstand people and grasp an unintended meaning from a word, can't we, in this fashion, after hearing the words "a rabbit's horn" come to cognise a single entity which is neither the meaning of "rabbit" nor of "horn" nor of any referring expression whatsoever, but is a distinct nonexistent item? Imaginary objects could be objects of such errant understanding!

In that case, Udayana perceptively remarks, there is nothing which can stop me from understanding tortoise-wool or some *other* imaginary object upon hearing the same expression, namely "a rabbit's horn". Once we have given up the conventional connection between words of a language and publicly knowable extra-linguistic entities of the world, and deviated from the systematic way of constructing the meaning of compound expressions on that basis, we cannot have any *rule* which can make us pick out exactly one precise intended nonentity and not another.

This reveals a further extensional trait of Udayana's thought. The want of definite criteria for identification and differentiation is the main obstacle to the admission of single designata of empty terms. Semantic rules assign real individuals to names and non-null sets of objects to predicates. There is no rule which can fix the referential links between distinct, vacuous singular terms and discriminable nonexistents simply because one end of the link is always missing.

Yet, we must do justice to the intuitively evident non-substitutability of empty descriptions. A funny couplet is often quoted by the Sanskrit grammarians:

> Here goes the barren woman's son, his hair adorned with sky-grown flower,
> Brandishing a bow made of rabbit-horn and clad in a tortoise-fur jacket.

However absurd this may sound, there is a certain suitability of the particular empty terms to their particular positions in their fantastic description. That is best explained by the presence of non-empty substance words at the end of every vacuous descriptive phrase. We know that in real life sons can walk, flowers adorn,

horns may be used to make bows and fur used for jackets. The quasi-understanding that we now have of it will be blocked if we reshuffle the empty terms as follows:

"Here goes the tortoise-wool, his hair adorned with a barren woman's son...." The explanation of the fact that we do not confuse rabbit-horns with sky-flowers despite recognising the nullity of both is not to be sought in our coming to grasp distinct unreals but in the meanings of the non-vacuous constituent words "rabbit", "horn", "sky" and "flower". Thus, even a verbal cognition of the meaning of "rabbit-horn" does not require a nonexistent item as its simple object.

Let us suppose that there is *some* determining factor which regulates our understanding of these vacuous expressions, something that compels us, as a rule, to grasp a rabbit's horn on hearing the words "a rabbit's horn" and to understand a mermaid by the word "mermaid". Arranging the argument in his favourite form of a destructive dilemma, Udayana proceeds as follows.

Such a hypothetical regulating factor can be either a learnable semantic convention (a rule of the form "By 'w' is to be understood o") or the very intrinsic nature of the word by virtue of which it is bound to arouse in us the appropriate idea or make us grasp its proper meaning.

On the former supposition, the semantic rule can be given either for the entire compound word "rabbit-horn" or separately for the component words. It cannot be given for the whole word, because we would then have to be in the impossible situation where the instructor points to an actual rabbit-horn and says "This object and its like is to be understood by the word 'rabbit-horn.'" In the basic Nyāya picture of learning the meaning of a simple word, we have to perceive or inferentially cognise the denotation or a sample of the denotation of the word alongside the word itself, at least once in the beginning. As Kripke and others maintain for proper names and natural-kind terms, the Nyāya believes that every simple word gains its meaning by sustaining a link with the original (humanly or superhumanly) *established or conferred* connection between the word and what it refers to. If it is theoretically impossible at any time to be in the presence of the referent, the word, by itself, can have no independent meaning.

To maintain that we do cognize the rabbit-horn in *some* way, namely as the designatum of the word "rabbit-horn" would be of no use. A lexical entry of the following form: 'by "flibbertigibbit" is to be understood that which is denoted by "flibbertigibbit"' would be quite unilluminating. If that is the *only* way to give the sense of a word then it amounts to the word having no sense at all which is not true in the case of the word "rabbit-horn".[19]

If, on the other hand, the semantic rule is given separately for the component words, the words "rabbit" and "horn" need not give up their own conventional meanings. The process of understanding these unsatisfied compound descriptions becomes as simple as this: first, grasp the meanings of the constituent words separately and then think of them as related according to the pattern suggested by the compound with or without the recognition that they are not actually related in this way in the world. But this falls squarely into the model of otherwise-

apprehension, which renders a separate designatum for the entire complex vacuous expression redundant (A.T.V., p. 72).

Let us now consider the other horn of the dilemma. Does the word connect itself to its own empty reference by its *own nature (svabhāva)?* If a word like "*khapuspa*" could, by its essential (phonetic?) power evoke the required meaning, then like the person who knows a language (e.g. Sanskrit), the person who does not know it would also have had the same idea of the fictional sky-flower on simply hearing the word (ibid., p. 72).

Udayana then critically considers an alternative intentional account of imaginary objects. Although a unitary unreal item can neither be perceived out there in the world by the senses, nor be designated by an empty term, can't we grasp the concept of a rabbit-horn as that which another person has in mind when he utters the word "rabbit-horn" with the obvious intention of conveying some message? Response to this comes in the form of a counter-query:

simply by recognising the speaker's honest intention to refer by the use of the expression "a flostrophobous groose", can we understand anything at all if no part of that gibberish conveys any conventional non-empty meaning to us? It would be no help for our imagination if that indefinite description is accompanied by the following illustrations

A groose — How a groose looks when it is flostrophobous

unless we associate every part of those jottings, systematically, with the looks of some familiar object of our experience. This is the basic principle of an empiricist theory of meaning. If semantic reference is *completely* lacking we cannot build our understanding in a vacuum simply on the basis of speakers' reference. Speakers' meaning (*tātparya*) can touch up or modify word meaning (*śakti*) but cannot replace it. At some point the story-teller's world of words (or the dreamer's world of subjective images) must touch the world of objective experience and knowledge for the story (or the dream) to make sense.

Finally, Udayana anticipates a more subtle form of the above intention-mentioning account of nonexistent reference:

> Well, it is easy to learn the meaning rule for such a word in the following manner: There is *some* designatory intention of the utterer of the word "rabbit-horn" and the object of that intention is what the word speaks of.
>
> (*A.T.V.*, p. 75)

When someone tells me a story about a certain descriptively identified single object, I need not actually be acquainted with that object or believe the story to be factually true in order to pick up the reference to the very object to which the storyteller intends to refer.

Udayana rejects this by appealing to what he takes to be the standard way of grasping the meaning of a new word. When we first hear the sentence "Rope the cow", we do not rest satisfied by telling ourselves that those sounds must have some meaning that their utterer intends them to have without bothering to look around for an object or an activity with which the distinguishable parts of that string of noise may correspond. The language-instruction or radical interpretation which always keeps us afloat at the level of "What the speaker intends to mean by those sounds" get us nowhere. We never *know* a language by merely referring to some unidentified indefinite objects of a wish to refer which we believe accompanies others' use of words.[20]

At this juncture another doctrine of understanding is provisionally attributed to the Buddhists. According to this, the fictional objects are just creations of our own individual emotions and other colouring effects of memory and desire. The child wishes to ride a horse so strongly that it finds a live horse in a stick with a curved handle not looking even remotely like a horse's head. A man madly afraid of murder sees a dagger in the air. Our desires and fears concoct fantasies and dreams which provide referents for our vacuous terms.

But then your chain of desires will create an entity distinct from mine, and the two creatures will inhabit completely different worlds. Those worlds being private and insulated ones, you will know nothing definite about my object of fantastic reference and I will have, at best, a guess as to what your objects of reference are.

> How can two people, completely ignorant of each other's contents of information, communicate about the nature of those contents?
>
> *A.T.V.*, p. 76

Our talk about such fictional items would then never be *meant for others*, and Udayana hints that such a private language would not be a language, because it would not have any public use.

To make someone else understand what I mean by a word, I must be able either

(a) To publicly handle the object(s) denoted, or
(b) To demonstrate the object as *that yonder one*, or
(c) To point out its perceptible similarity with another tangible familiar object, or
(d) To describe it truly by using words with known meanings, thereby stating an objectively observable situation.

Since we can do none of these things with a creature of private fancy, it does not fare at all well as the proposed unitary referent of a term like "rabbit-horn". What we intelligently deny the existence of, cannot, and need not, be such an object of private desire.

Unlike the classical Indian grammarians who rigged up thought objects as primary meanings of words, the Nyāya would have us reduce all verbal

expressions to simpler components until we reach elements that directly designate real items available to possible *experience* in the wide Nyāya conception of the term.

The Nyāya does recognise, somewhat like Frege in his middle period, that empty terms pretending to be singular may be used in a sentence which can be *mock-understood*.[21] A sentence like "The white toy elephant ran to the teddy bear and whispered. ..." gives rise not to genuine word-generated *knowledge* about the world but to what they call make-believe awareness or mock-understanding (*ahāryajñāna*). Both our metaphorical and fictional understanding of statements lacking in straightforward semantic congruence have been covered by this notion of make-believe comprehension or quasi-understanding which has sometimes been defined as "an awareness or inner perception which is due to *desire* to take a content as true during a full recognition of its contrariety to fact". In so far as our conniving use of a fictional singular term ushers us into the world of such non-serious discourse, even our negative existentials need to be treated as mock-assertions of absence rather than serious reports of genuine lacks in the order of things. The absence of colour in air or the posthumous nonexistence of my grandmother can be said to be parts of the ontic fabric of the world because colour and my grandmother are real items (even if they fail to exist *in* air and *in* the present time respectively). But the world does not really suffer the lack of sky-flowers or *The Absence of Mr Glass* – the doubly fictional entity mentioned in G.K. Chesterton's story with that name.[22] The time and location-relative nonexistence of a real absentee can be admitted as a genuine object of knowledge, but the absence of an unreal will be as unreal as its absentee. From the point of view of serious factual discourse, therefore, you can singularly deny the presence of something in some place or at some time but its existence altogether cannot be denied after you have genuinely referred to it. That, at any rate, is the Nyāya view.

A4: DOES UDAYANA POSE A THREAT TO THE GAMES APPROACH?

Thus the Nyāya position in general, and Udayana's arguments in particular seem to strongly defend the dogma that only what exists can be genuinely talked about. The whole idea behind my games approach, on the contrary, is that we talk of non-existent items even for the sake of saying that they are so. The clash between the two approaches seems inevitable. Yet surprisingly enough, I find the general thrust of Udayana's argument quite unthreatening to my own solution to the problem of singular denials of existence. Here are some tentative reasons for my complacency.

First, most of the examples of empty terms that Udayana or the Buddhist uses are *non-singular*. Denying that such *kinds* of things as rabbits' horns or sons of childless woman exist is logically quite distinct from denying that a particular fictional hero, or a specific legendary country, is real. We have tried to imagine possibly perceptual situations where rabbits with horns might still be mistakenly seen, but we do not know what it would be to *hallucinate* a childless woman's son, and a particular one at that. None of the examples of suspect empty terms actually used by Udayana or Gangeśa are from works of fiction. About our reference to Sherlock Holmes or that green slime (even in the context of a negative existential) the question "Who/Which one do you mean?" would elicit a decent answer inside the appropriate game. But about our artificial designator "the/a rabbit-horn" the question "Which one?" will normally be felt to be ironic or silly.

Throughout this work, I have shown a readiness to relinquish such artificially combined apparent subject-terms to a Russellian sort of deconstructive paraphrase.

Second, Udayana is concerned about what words stand for in a clearly ontological sense, confining himself explicitly to what we have called game (1) discourse. And it is agreed that in game (1) we can, by no means, seriously and genuinely refer to a fictional item.

Finally, even the Nyāya tries to make sense of game (2) talk in terms of the rather ill-developed notion of mock-understanding. All that Udayana has shown is that we cannot communicate with words without depending *ultimately* on the spatio-temporal framework of game (1) talk. By calling games (2) and (3) "parasitic on and imitative of game (1)" we have admitted this dependence at the very outset.

Udayana, like Frege, is not bothered with mock-thoughts about fictional items because "it is all play". The absence of Holmes in the actual world is logically unlike the absence of colour in air. It is as much serious a gap in reality as is our talk about Holmes, that is not a serious gap at all.

Going against Nyāya, the early eighth century stalwart of the grammarian tradition of Bhartṛhari[23] insisted that both in the context of jokes and in denials of existence, language forces us to treat some empty terms as "nominal stems". If the expression "wetting with fire" were *unfit* (*ayogya*) to convey any meaning whatsoever (as a Nyāya-theorist would say), how can people use it as an ironical example of an absurd situation? Which situation would they be referring to as impossible if the expression did not denote anything? Thus, when faced with the apparently inconsistent triple assumptions:

(1) Intelligible noun-phrases/nominal stems stand for things which exist.
(2) "Rabbit-horn" is an intelligible nominal stem.
(3) A Rabbit-horn does not exist.

The stalwart grammarian Nāgeśa does not take the Nyāya tack of knocking out (2). Instead, he relaxes (1) by introducing the concept of "existing in the intellect". If the Naiyāyika jovially asks: "In *whose* intellect does this rabbit-horn exist?" Nāgeśa would reply: "Yours, because you just talked about it."

If a specific story is told about a particular horned rabbit, I can accommodate Nāgeśa's insight by means of my picture of game (2). But it is part of my Nyāya robustness that I recognise that even the assertion of the *nonexistence* of such an entity of crypto-zoology would partly draw me into the relevant game of make-believe. If I stick to pure game (1), I have to give away all such empty nouns to an Udayana-style paraphrase.

A5: DO NONEXISTENT OBJECTS FIND A PLACE IN THE "NEW LOGIC" OF ABSENCES?

The correct construal of the cognition displayed in the negative existential statement seemingly about a rabbit-horn became an important issue once again in the

"New Logic" initiated by Gangeśa, the early 14th-century philosopher of logic and language, who wrote in the same tradition as Udayana, namely the *Nyāya-Vaiśesika*.

Now, the standard linguistic expression of our knowledge of absence involves explicit or implicit reference to both the *absentee* and the *locus* of the absence. When we say "David Lewis is not in Oxford", we make clear *who* is said to be absent and *where*. Usually both of these elements again are identified *under some descriptions*: e.g. "The author of *Counterfactuals* does not reside in the city where All Souls College is situated." Being the author of *Counterfactuals* will then be technically known as the qualifier of the absenteehood of David Lewis. Now, suppose David Lewis were not the author of the book (someone else wrote it). Then the absence of *David Lewis, the author of Counterfactuals* (like the absence of Shakespeare as the author of *War and Peace*) will be available not only in Oxford but everywhere in the world – even in Princeton where David Lewis is present. The locus of the absence will be irrelevant, because in one sense the absence will be located everywhere. Notice that this would not be straightforwardly dismissible as a fictional absence like the absence of Sherlock Holmes or of Mr Glass. The absentee would still be a real item, namely David Lewis. Only the property which will figure as the *limitor* of his absenteehood will be non-resident in him. Can we interpret our apparently absolute (unlocated or everywhere-located) nonexistence of rabbit-horns in the above manner?

Let us, very briefly, give the background of this technical notion. Until very recently in Western philosophy, the rejection of empty singular terms went hand in hand with the rejection of the idea of existence as a genuine predicate. The general consideration against existence as a predicate was that its inapplicability range was empty. There is no place for a predicate, it was supposed, which could not be said to be *false* of a genuine subject. Now, Gangeśa not only uses "That jar exists" as an example of a perfectly decent subject–predicate sentence, he also defends the claim of existence, nameability, knowability as universal predicates which are *bona fide* predicates nevertheless. While empty singular terms are never allowed to stand unreduced, unnegatable properties are supposed to be quite acceptable as genuine predicables. Our intuitive notion of a property seems to require that it should be a *distinguisher* and hence lacked by at least one object. But Gangeśa argues that if being lacked by at least one individual is a necessary (second-order) property of all properties, then it is itself a universal property which is not lacked by any (relevant) individual (i.e. by any first-level property). So at least *this* universal property has to be admitted. And if this one, then why not existence and knowability? Otherwise, if even this second-order property (namely *being lacked by at least one individual*) is non-universal, then it is lacked by at least one first-order property which means that some first-order property *is* universal. For whatever this argument[24] is worth, it shows that Gangeśa was conscious of taking a risk in speaking of *existence*, etc. as properties. Now, once these universal unnegatable properties are admitted into our ontology we have to allow inferences like the following:

This is nameable, because it is knowable.

Such inferences will be based on the *pervasion*-rule (connecting the *inferable* with the *mark*):

Whatever is knowable is nameable.

Given that the general understanding of pervasion-rules is in terms of *absences* of the properties being co-located (a pervades b iff b is never present in places where a is absent), how can we understand the above *pervasion* between properties which are never absent? We need to find *absences* even of universal properties. It is in this context that the trick of finding an absence even of something which is present by virtue of an inappropriate or non-co-located limitor of absenteehood is tried. Even if *f* is present in L, it can be said to be absent in that very L if *f*'s absenteehood is limited by the property *g* when *g* is a property which *f* does not have. Cows have horns. But we can find the absence of horns even in cows if we look for rabbits' horns in cows. In normal veridical perception of absence the absentee is not *barely* presented in the content. If I miss my blue pen I miss it *as* my blue pen. This qualification of the absentee is normally to be done by a property which is located in the same place as the absenteehood, e.g. the pen has both the property of being my blue pen as well as the property of absenteehood in the above case. But, if I find that very pen's absence but miss it (mistakenly) as my red pen, then the absenteehood and the limitor of the absenteehood will not be co-located. The absenteehood will still reside in the (actually blue) pen but the absence-limiting property will reside in some other red pen which is not missing. Such absences are technically called "*Absences of which the absenteehood is limited by a non-co-occurrent property*". For brevity, in what follows, we shall use the neologism "heterologous absence" for such absences. Heterologous absences are available everywhere. Since horns which are rabbit parts exist nowhere, the absence of horns whose absenteehood is delimited by the property of being rabbit parts is to be found everywhere. Even animals *with* horns are *without* such horns. It is easy to see that one non-Meinongian way to encash our negative existentials which use empty descriptions for their apparent subject-terms (e.g. "The round-square does not exist") will be to say that they describe such absences. Notice, that we need not take *rabbit-horns* or *square-circles* themselves – those spurious and imaginary entities — as absentees and flout the realistic principle that absolute nonentities cannot figure even as absentees, in our *serious* (non-mock) awareness of absences. We take *horns* and *circles* as absentees, only limiting their absenteehood with the inappropriate properties of *belonging to a rabbit* or *being square in shape*. Do we actually apprehend such ubiquitous absences? If we do, can we call such an apprehension a genuine piece of *knowledge*? Should heterologous absences be given a place in our ontology?

We cannot reject heterologous absence just on the grounds that it would be universally available. When, instead of the property-limitor, the relational limitor is inappropriate to the absentee, we get another sort of absence which is also universally available. Suppose a bee is sitting on a fragrant flower. The bee is in *contact* with the flower and the fragrance is *inherent* in it. The bee is not *inherent* in the flower. Nor is the sweet smell in *contact* with it. Even in that flower we can find

the absence of the fragrance if we permit the absenteehood of the fragrance to be relationally delimited by the inappropriate relation of *contact*. Indeed fragrance as something in *contact* is absent from everything in the universe. If relationally heterologous absences are admitted into our ontology why should we not countenance absences whose property-limitors are non-co-occurrent with the relevant absenteehood? Gangeśa, however, rejects property-wise heterologous absences for the following reasons. This is how the issue is handled.

(1) Gangeśa first rules that no property can be reckoned as the limitor of absenteehood unless it is resident in the absentee. According to the upholders of this new kind of nonexistence, the property determining the mode of nonexistence appears separately and independently of the absentee and its real qualities. Thus it could become possible for us to apprehend the absence of the Emperor of India as determined by the property of reigning in 1992, in spite and because of the fact that no Emperor of India (e.g. Akbar, Aśoka, or King George V) has the character of ruling the country at present. Gangeśa thinks that this is *not* epistemically possible, because the property which plays the role of a limitor of absenteehood does not play this role independently of the recognised absentee.

A cognition of absence, upon the Nyāya analysis, is epistemologically multiply qualificative in nature. In its content the qualificand is qualified by a *characterised character*.[25] A cognition is simply qualificative when we cognise an object *as* manifesting a certain feature, as related to another object, as falling under a general concept, etc. All verbalised cognition is bound to be qualificative in this sense, because to mention the object of knowledge (even if it is *knowledge of* rather than *knowledge that* in apparent form) in intelligible language is to bring it under some characterisation. But the kind we are now concerned with comes with a further character qualifying the qualifier (and almost always some quality determines the qualificand as well). It is therefore called "*a cognition which bathes into a characteriser which is itself characterised*". Under the Nyāya analysis the knowledge expressed by "That man has a stick"[26] is such a multiply qualified cognition. The "subject" or the qualificand is:

The indexically demonstrated or otherwise indicated yonder object, as qualified by manhood [because it is apprehended *as* a man, not merely as *that* object]
So 'manhood' is the limiter of the qualificandness of the qualificand.

The predicated qualifier is:

The stick, as qualified by stickhood (because we recognise and identify the object in his hand *as* a stick). (The case could be made vivid by adding "redness" with it.)

"Stickhood" becomes the limitor of its qualifier. Now, all cognition of absence is said to be of this type. We not only cognize the absence as the absence of something, but we also have to recognise *what* that something is. If the absentee remains unrecognised, the absence cannot be spoken about or specifically known. Hence when we see the absence of a cup on the table the content of our cognition is the following complex (including the locus of the absence which is the chief qualificand).

Q (table, Q (absence, Q (cup, cupness))).[27]

But, for any cognition of Q (a, Q (b,c)), a prior cognition of Q (b,c) is a necessary condition. We would not be aware of the tree as adorned with white blossoms unless we first know the blossoms to be white. Similarly we cannot be sure of the absence of a blue pot here unless we know the absent pot as blue. I do not ever feel the absence of elephant's eggs on my typewriter although in a most liberal sense there indeed are no elephant's eggs on it. The reason is that I do not have a prior knowledge of any egg as having been laid by an elephant. As evidence of this principle (cognition of the absentee as really characterised by the absence-specifying property is a necessary causal condition of our cognition of absence) Gangeśa adduces the following indirect proof. If there were no such necessary conditions, we could have known the absence of an object by a mere nonqualificative "simple apprehension" of the object (uncategorised as of any kind) in question. It is considered to be borne out by our common introspective evidence that we never have such a nonjudgemental awareness of absence. Knowledge of absence is always a knowledge *that*. One cannot claim to be acquainted directly with a lack as one can with a patch of colour. Absences are not actually existent positive particulars which have any identity of their own. They present themselves necessarily *as* absences of something, and that missing something must be a *bona fide* qualified object. The Naiyāyika believes (inferentially arrives at the theory) that there is a nonqualificative cognition of each object before it assumes the role of a qualifier or qualificand in the fully fledged, *verbalisable* qualificative cognition. But an absence does not emerge as an object of cognition at that level. It has to take the form: *The x which is ø-ish is not here in this location*. And if the *x* in question is recognised to not really øish such a negative cognition cannot take place. Hence the impossibility of cognising an absence of the form

Q (absence, Q (the x such that
$\sim \phi x, \phi$)).

(2) It is then counter-argued that all that is required is that we have *some* kind of cognition of the absentee as qualified by the absence-limiting property, not that we must have a *true* or *veridical* cognition of that kind!

Obviously when we judge that the round-square does not exist at all, we cannot first correctly cognize a heterologous square which is round. If we did, we would have judged that a round-square does exist. Cognition of such heterologous absence comes only as a sequel to, and a rectification of, an erroneous ascription of a non-resident property to the absentee. It is as if we first erroneously think that some flowers out there in the garden are really green. Thus we have a cognition of

Q (flowers, green colour).

But then we gather from common botanical lore that no flowers are green, that green flowers do not exist. Why not

Q (absence, Q (flowers, green colour)?

In this way, can we be said to know, the absence of flowers whose role as absentees is specified by the property of being green?

To this, various replies have been given. First, it has been pointed out that if the piece of cognition of absence is generated by and logically based upon an error, it will be contaminated by the non-veridical character of its causal mother. If I hallucinate a green-skinned man and suddenly find him missing, my report that the green-skinned man is no longer there would be as mistrustfully taken as my report, earlier, that there is a green-skinned man over here.[28] The possibility of an erroneous or imaginative *cognition* of absence can thus be established but not the objectivity of such an *absence*. Second, even if such erroneous qualificative cognition is possible, there is no reason why it should always and necessarily happen. Yet this special type of heterologous absence is characteristically said to occur everywhere. If our cognition of the absence of *speakability as inherent* is dependent upon the occasional mistake of supposing that speakability is an inherent property, then we can cognise such an absence *only* in those cases where we make that mistake which goes against the universally recognised omnipresence of that absence. Moreover, as long as we are under the spell of the mistake that a is ø-ish we cannot perceive the universally present absence of a as ø-ish. But when the mistake is detected we do not see a as ø-ish so we cannot miss it as such.

(3) A variant of the above-criticised defence of this type of heterologous absence is also considered. When we assert or cognise the absence of the jar on the floor, do we not first posit an artificial mock-cognition of a conjunction between the jar and the floor (as it were, *supposing* there *is* a jar on the floor and then negating the supposition) just in order to cancel it by the assertion of absence? Similarly, can't we posit a mock-cognition of the absentee (the jar) as characterised by a nonresident property (e.g. pencilhood) just to reject it later on by the knowledge that the jar *qua* a pencil is absent from the floor (even if there is a jar on the floor).

Instead of erroneously combining the foreign property with the absentee we are now thinking of combining them imaginatively in a make-believe fashion. Do we not in fictions consciously make such combinations, thinking of mountains as made of cheese or fountains as showering pearls instead of water! (Our talk about the content of our own detected illusions strongly resembles our conscious efforts to fabricate fiction with respect to this feature of pretending to apprehend mutually foreign elements as if they were joined together). Couldn't we presuppose such a consciously pretended imputation of *rabbit-part-ness* upon a horn as the basis of our cognition of the absence of horns as rabbit-parts? Here too the answer evidently is "No." The relation between the absentee and the locus of absence which is posited only to be denied is not an ontically intrinsic part of the absence which is cognised. That is why Gangeśa *does* admit absence whose absenteehood is determined by a nonco-ocurrent *relation*: e.g. the absence of sound as related by the relation of *contact*. Sound is not in contact with anything in the world and yet we can superimpose an inappropriate relation as qualifying the absentee, thus making the resulting absence in this particular instance universally locatable. But the property tagged with the absence which specifies the role of the absentee cannot thus be deliberately superimposed without affecting the correctness and seriousness of the

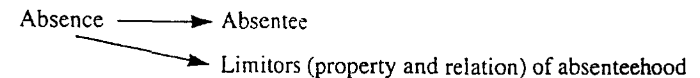
cognition. If a cognition is to be taken as our guide to how things stand in the world, it has to be *serious* and *faultless*. The absentee as actually qualified by the property delimiting its absenteehood is said to be an essential ontic element of the absence to which it is related by a peculiar "selfsameness" relation, hence we must be careful about the *facthood* of that characterisation.

At first it looks a bit arbitrary and awkward that while both the absences are equally objectionable with respect to their unresisted omnipresence – Gangeśa should admit absence delimited by an inappropriate relation but not one which is delimited by an inappropriate property. The rationale might be this: absence of x (which is in fact not ø-ish) as delimited by the property ø is *necessarily* omnipresent and unresistable, whereas absence of x [in y, (when x is not related by R" to y)] as delimited by the relation R" is not necessarily so. Thus the relationally heterologous absence of a cup as related by inherence is available in a mantlepiece (where the cup cannot inhere) but is not available in the handle of the cup (where the cup is said to inhere – in Nyāya ontology the whole inheres in the part). The inherent cup is absent on the table but present in the cup parts. But the-cup-which-is-a-man is absent everywhere forever. Intuitively, too, one can perhaps tentatively appreciate the difference between the two cases. Consider the following statements:

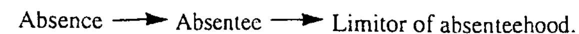
(a) The sweet taste of the candy does not exist as touching the candy as the wrapping-paper does.
(b) A bat which lays eggs is absent from this world.

Both statements are somewhat odd. But the first resembles a serious ontological statement about the world, while the second half-ushers us into the world of imagination.

(4) Finally, Raghunātha makes two robustly straightforward points about this problem. He first explains Gangeśa's reason for disallowing such absence – but in a very original way. Here we come back to commonsense to remind ourselves that, after all, we do not cognise the property which limits the absenteehood over and above the absentee. Once we have known that there is no flower on a tree, we do not wait further to find out what the limiting property or relation relevant to the absence of flowers would be. Our statement of absence (in its most spontaneous, natural form) does not have three distinct – independently fillable – places or gaps for the absence, the absentee and the limitor of absenteehood. It is only as the qualifier of the absentee that we come to recognise the limiting property and "not on its own right" (*na tu svātantryena*). To make it graphic, our cognition of the absence does not take the form:



where there would be an independent path directly leading from the absence to the limitor such that any arbitrary property could be assigned the role of the limitor no matter what the absentee is. But, rather it takes the form:



If, in this way, the cognition of absence cannot arise via our awareness of an absentee *as* characterised by a nonresident property, then it can neither make us aware of the limitorhood of such a property in relation to the absentee (Raghunātha *Dīdhiti*).

But the second point that Raghunātha makes shows his openness and philosophical courage: "If, however," he remarks "people *do* have an authentic or correct awareness [resulting in a true sentence] which intuitively appears in introspection to be of the form: 'As a jar, the piece of cloth is not [there]', then it is not within the powers of even the Master of the Gods to deny such [heterologous] absence." The comment does not seem to have any touch of mockery in it; rather it tends to leave the final judgement upon this matter to an appeal to intuition. We must notice, of course, the adjective "correct". By analysing an error, we cannot hope to conclude anything about whether a kind of absence is to be admitted into our ontology or not. It is only if the truth-claim of an intuition is justifiable by reason that the intuition can serve as a guide to the order of things in the world.

(5) Later Gadādhara clarified the problem in this manner. Consider the perception, at a certain place, of the absence of kitchen fire. Before we start *not seeing* such fire we must form a notion or expectation for some fire as belonging to the kitchen. What we need as a necessary condition for this perception is not merely a couple of unconnected pieces of cognition:

(a) of the property of pertaining to the kitchen and

(b) of the property of being a fire.

We need a properly riveted (and the *riveting* should correspond to an actually obtaining state of affairs, on pain of falsity of the resulting cognition) judgement of the following form: the fire (I perceive to be absent) would have belonged to the kitchen.

(or, $(\exists x)$ (x pertains to the kitchen and x is a fire)).

In default of this type of riveted cognition of some particular horse as winged, we cannot really have any cognition of the form: the winged horse is not there (anywhere).

We can imagine having a cognition of absence as inchoate as the feeling that "something – I don't know what – is missing". Such an awareness is technically classified as one "without a limitor of qualificandness",[29] e.g. cognition of a white cup as *something (that is) white*, when the universal whiteness qualifies the predicate "white colour" but nothing qualifies the subject. It is not as a cup but just as something which is white that the cup figures as the subject of the perceptual content. Phenomenologically such a cognition is supposed to arise without a clear identification of its own subject. It might seem plausible to argue that the absentee might occur in the embedded cognition without its own real character – just as a simple unqualified object – in which case its incompatibility with a non-resident property might go unnoticed, and such a property can then pass or pose as the limitor of its absenteehood. But that argument adds no real support to the case for such a heterologous absence. Even if we do not register (in a particular piece of

cognition) that a certain animal is a *rabbit* and therefore *cannot* have horns, to come to think of it as possessing horns (and as being a nonexistent item in that capacity) remains as much of an error as it would if we recognised rabbits *as* hornless and then thought of them as hornful. All these hypotheses of acknowledged error, deliberate pretence and uncharacterised qualificand only make room for an intentional contentual relation of "*determinandum-determinans*"[30] between rabbits and horns, or between horns and rabbit-part-ness. But the causal constraint is much stronger. It is not sufficient that the absentee should be make-believedly determined by the limiting property, but the said property must actually reside as a qualifier in the said absentee. The relation of *qualificand-qualifier* is not merely cognitional, it must always have an objective basis. It is this real qualification of the subject by the predicated property which makes a judgemental cognition hit its mark, truth, and distinguishes it from a cognitive misfire whose contentual arrangement of subject and predicate (roughly) never automatically reaches reality.

(6) To come back to the centre of interest. What about our undeniable belief in the nonexistence of rabbit-horns? Sondala, to whom this idea of a heterologous absence is attributed, was no Meinong. With the classical Naiyāyika he too held that an unexampled or empty property cannot be the limitor of absenteehood, any more than a nonexistent fiction can itself be the absentee. Yet the absence of a rabbit-horn is available everywhere, e.g. in a cow, which although it has horns, is nevertheless destitute of rabbit-horns. How else can we account for this absence, he argued, except by admitting that here, though the absentee is the horn(s), the limitor of absenteehood is the property *rabbittiness*, (*śāśīyatva*) short. The horn as rabbitty is found lacking in the cow. But Gaṅgeśa rejects this analysis as artificial, unhelpful and unnecessary. Our denial of a particular predication (*a is not f*) is always founded upon a (real or hypothetical) prior projection of that predication. In this case we cannot *superimpose* the horn on the cow, because the cow already has horns (*f*ness can be *superimposed* on x only if x is not f). We cannot superimpose the rabbit-horn because we have no impression left behind by a prior awareness of that fictitious object. The content superimposed must be gathered from our stock of remembered real objects or exemplified properties. I cannot even mistakenly take a dimly lit shape for a round-square because I have no memory of a round-square, which I have seen before. So, ultimately it reduces to superimposition of rabbittiness upon perceived horns. Thus if one really sticks to the claim of having known the absence of rabbit-horn in a cow, the content of this knowledge is to be parsed as the absence (of which the cow's horns are the location), and rabbittiness the absentee (not to be confused with Sondala's proposal that being a rabbit-part was the limitor of absenteehood and simply a horn was the absentee). Cow's horns are quite real things. And "rabbittiness" signifies a real property possessed by the rabbit's legs, ears and fur, etc. But, horns of a cow, we have now come to recognise, are not rabbits' horns.

(7) What if one is more daring than Sondala and claims that the nonexistent object rabbit-horn itself is what is absent when we have a valid non-apprehension

of rabbit-horns in a cow, etc? This is ruled out by the following argument. We can be sure of the absence of W when and only when W fulfils both of these conditions:

(a) *W* is not apprehended in situation S;
(b) *W* is known to be eligible or fit for apprehension in the situation S (i.e. if *W* were there then we would have apprehended it).

That is to say, a situation S when accompanied by a nonapprehension of W would not guarantee the absence of W unless it contains all the causal conditions that make for the apprehension of W minus the absentee (W) itself and properties which could not be present in the absence of W. Nonapprehension of God or the soul or of atoms by ordinary perceptual apparatus is no signal of their nonexistence because the second condition (b) is not fulfilled. We cannot proceed from the fact that an electron cannot be seen to the belief that it is not here because it might lack "*fitness*" to be seen, e.g. a particular situation might be devoid of the necessary conditions for its visibility. Can we in this manner argue that the rabbit-horn (let's say, since it is a horn, after all) could be apprehended if it existed, that it has the "fitness" for apprehension which together with its necessary nonapprehension yields a knowledge of absence?

But all that we can sensibly claim is that *horns* have this perceivability and since they are not perceived in rabbits, they are absent in rabbits. In order to prove *the rabbit-horn* as the absentee of an absence, we have to artificially, i.e. make-believedly assume the *causal conditions of apprehensibility* for this imaginary absentee. But such a mock-perceivability can be endowed upon any arbitrary figment of imagination, without any restriction whatsoever and that possibility makes it epistemologically valueless.[31] An argument like the one below would be patently wrong-headed.

"There is an objective absence of tortoise-wool in this blanket because we cannot see or touch any such wool there, whereas if it were there or elsewhere it could be seen, or at least we could mistakenly see or pretend to see such wool". Imagined perceivability can only yield imagined absences.

(8) Against Gangeśa's bland fiat that the true sentence "Rabbit-horn does not exist" must be reinterpreted, avoiding commitment to any nonentity, saying simply that there is absence of horns in rabbits – we might feel the commonsense resistance that since there is no locative case-ending inflecting the word putatively signifying the locus of the absence (the word 'rabbit' is not in the locative case), the above sentence cannot be understood as reporting an absence of something *in* the rabbit. The reply that Gadādhara[32] gives to this is that competent users of a language sometimes use words in a fashion which does not exactly follow the structure of their thoughts but pictures an objective state of affairs by means of somewhat strangely concatenated mental images. Thus to report the fact that I do not possess a car, I might humorously say, "My car was never bought." It would be quite foolish to think that I thereby commit myself to a nonexistent entity, namely my car. Commitment to the existence of designated objects is not a property of what I say but a property of my interpretation of my statements. The Naiyāyika would agree with Strawson that

> Up to a point the reliance upon a close examination of the actual use of words is the best, and indeed the only sure way in philosophy... But the structure he (the metaphysician) seeks does not readily display itself on the surface of language, but lies submerged. He must abandon his only sure guide when the guide cannot take him as far as he wishes to go.
>
> *Individuals*, p. 10.

In this context – and its like – even reference to the real *locus* of the absence is to be looked for in the break-up of the compound expression which apparently gives us only the absentee. As one contemporary Indian philosopher has noted, the way in which we verbally express our commonsense appraisal of absence is "an affair of linguistic form and may be largely tinged with rhetorical motives".[33] Thus one could playfully speak of Wittgenstein's wife and assert her nonexistence. The reference to the locus which seems to be missing (the query "where and when did she not exist?" has no answer) has to be discovered in the apparent subject of negation itself. We are speaking of the absence of the property of having a wife in Wittgenstein. That the negative "existential judgement hides the locus reference in the figurative form"[34] is thus apparent. Such, at any rate, would be the Nyāya view. And in so far as we confine ourselves to game 1 or real-world talk, we can agree with it wholeheartedly. Not all vacuous terms get assigned a reference in some game of make-believe or other. Some of them are just solecisms or rhetorical tricks. There is no reason in every case even to pretend that they refer or to suppose that anyone actually played any game (2) or game (3) with them. Let us assume that we know that no plants are animals. A perverse way to state this plain truth would be "Plant-animals do not exist." The expression "a plant-animal" is as empty as the expression "the absence of a plant-animal". They are not geniune referring expressions at all. They ought to be broken up in order to be understood. Once, however, a body of myth, fable or legend has made reference to such plant-beasts available, then we can pretend to speak of a Barometz or a Mandrake[35] and say in the master-game, that it does not really exist. Still its absence would be as undesignatable in plain fact-stating language (i.e. game (1) as the mythical being itself is. Absence, we learn, is one thing and nonexistence quite another.

NOTES

[1] *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way*, Chapter XII, pp 144–5, 1979.

[2] *Asattvapratipādaka pramanābhavāt* – preface to sub-commentary on Nyāya Sūtra 3.1.1. Actually Vācaspati Miśra (900 A.D.) explicitly anticipates David Pears's argument from referential contradiction (see 2.12 above) when he says "Should being be regarded as a nonuniversal property then the word 'exists' could not be employed without tautology and 'does not exist' could not be used without contradiction" (Nyāya Sūtra. Tātparya Tīkā, p. 33).

[3] According to ancient Indian semantic thought, the subject and the predicate of a sentence were normally said to be equi-referential in the broad sense that they were meant to apply to or be true of the same object or objects. Compare Buridan, the medieval logician, on this point: "for the truth of an affirmative proposition it is required that the subject and predicate *suppone for* the same" (Quaestio Utrum Chimera sit intelligibilus) from Sten Ebbesen, (1986). p 137.

[4] Note the deliberate "ungrammaticality" of the present-tense sentence "It does not exist in the past" ("*prāk nāsti*"). Russell in his lectures on Logical Atomism remarked: "The occurrence of tense in verbs is an exceedingly annoying vulgarity" (*Logic and Knowledge*, p. 248).

[5] To use Cartwright's (1963) term for any philosopher who believes that there are all those particular things which do not exist.

[6] The account, referred to later in this chapter as the "otherwise cognition" story of illusion, is very similar to Russell's account of false belief in *The Problems of Philosophy*.
[7] See Matilal (1971) pp. 135–45 for a searching analysis of the Nyāya Buddhist debate on this point, connecting epistemological theories of error with the semantic theory of empty singular terms.
[8] The idea that every meaningful "nominal stem" (an inflectable noun) must stand for some real entity goes back to pre-Nagarjuna Indian philosophy. About 500 years before Uddyotakara, Nagarjuna's *Deconstruction of Disputes* (v.v) anticipates the following objection to the Buddhist doctrine of universal emptiness:

> "The denial 'There is no pot in the house' makes sense because 'pot' stands for something existent. Similarly 'There is no independent nature in things' makes sense only if 'independent nature' stands for something existing. Only existent things can be said to be absent" (verses 9, 10, 11 of v. v).

The germ of the fully developed Nyāya doctrine that real absence can only be of a real absentee is already there!
[9] See Matilal (1971), *Epistemology, Logic & Grammar*, p. 110.
[10] Compare Frege's distinction between evoked *ideas* and expressed *senses*; the word "form" need not be take too literally – it can be taken as some sort of blueprint for an object.
[11] Compare Frege on the *excluder* use of "exists" in "That lime tree exists" (vide: The Thought: A Logical Enquiry). If my intention is realised when I refer to something with the expression "That lime tree", then the thought expressed by the sentence "That lime tree is my idea" must obviously be negated.
[12] See "Noneism or Allism" in *Mind*, January, 1990.
[13] See Chapter 4.2, Mark Siderits *Indian Philosophy of Language*, (1991) for a sympathetic analysis of the Buddhist position.
[14] Routley calls this the characterisation postulate.
[15] See pp 35–40 of McDermott's translation of the relevant passages of Ratnakīrti in *An Eleventh Century Buddhist Logic of "Exists"*. D. Reidel, Holland, (1969).
[16] Siderits calls the Buddhists "Superficial or Casual Meinongians", construing most of our reference to ordinary objects as reference to nonexistents. See the searching discussion in Chapter 4 of his *Indian Philosophy of Language*, especially pp. 137–144, for the Ratnakīrti-Udayana exchange.
[17] These two technical terms are from the Indian theories of perceptual error. Some theorists regard such error as a misallocation of real items (seeing things otherwise) while others believe that the direct object of error is a "cooked-up" unreal entity.
[18] See Matilal (1971) p. 135.
[19] Kripke, in "Naming and Necessity", Lecture III, writes: "If one was determining the referent of a name like "Glunk" to himself...One had better have some *independent* determination of the referent of "Glunk."
[20] Recently Mark Siderits (1991) tried to defend this type of a speaker's-intention theory of reference from standard (e.g. "Elm Beech"-type) objections. But I do not see how any account of reference in terms of associated mental images can work for a public language. As Frege and Wittgenstein saw clearly, comparing each other's evoked images has little to do with understanding a word!
[21] *Posthumous Writings*, p. 130. Instead of speaking of fiction, we could speak of "mock-thoughts".
[22] In the story some people mishear a practising juggler who was throwing up glasses and trying to catch them, shouting: "One, two, three! Missed a glass! and believe that a Mr Glass's life is at risk behind the closed doors. At the end of the story Father Brown says: "Mr. Glass is so extremely absent that there never was anybody so absent as Mr. Glass. "Do you mean he is absent from the Town?" I mean he is absent from the. ... Nature of things so to speak".
[23] See Pages 118–19 of *Parama-Laghu-Manjusā* of Nageśa Kurukshetra University, India, (1975).
[24] See a discussion of this argument in Matilal (1968b).
[25] See Matilal (1968), pp. 60–61.
[26] In the Indian version of the "basic combination" "has" takes the place of "is"; hence the replacement of "a is f" by "a has t" when "t" can be things like sticks, jars and birds or properties like wisdom, humanity, etc.

[27] Compare Bergmann's analysis of *Perceptual Content*:

> When presented with a spot's being green, I am presented not only with two simples, namely an individual and a character, but also with individuality, universality and exemplification. Unless I were presented with individuality and universality, I could not know that one simple was an individual, and a character, nor which was which. Unless I were also presented with exemplification, I could not know that the individual exemplifies the character. Hence five entities have ontological status.
>
> G. Bergmann (*Logic and Reality*, p. 64.) 1969

The Nyāya analysis of such a predication cognition is a bit different in detail but in the same general vein. It analyses the knowledge that a has t into knowledge of:
(1) a, the individual
(2) t, the character
(3) a-ness, the property by virtue of which the individual is recognised as the individual
(4) t-ness, the property by virtue of which the character is recognised as the character
(5) *exemplification*, or conjunction or identity or any other relation, which specifies the tie by which (1) and (2) are recognised to be related as individual and character.
[28] By Nyāya lights, therefore, a master-game proposition like "that green slime does not exist", in so far as it involves irreducible reference to a hallucinated absentee, will be contaminated by the same error as the hallucination itself. Such nonexistence is no part of what we can *know* about the real world.
[29] Nirdharmitāvacchedakaka.
[30] Nirūpya-nirūpaka-bhāva.
[31] Vāsudeva remarks in his commentary to the relevant section of Gangeśa's text that the presence of imagined causal conditions does not make something fit for actual perception because that can be invoked in the case of any and every figment of imagination.
[32] P. 257, Anumāna Gādādharī.
[33] See p. 47 of *Essays in Analytical Philosophy*, G.N. Bhattacharya (1989).
[34] Ibid.
[35] See *The Book of Imaginary Beings* by J.L. Borges, Penguin Books, (1969) pp. 28 and 96 for the history of mythical vegetable animals called "Barometz" and "Mandrake".

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